

THEOSOPHY EXPLAINED

TABLE OF THEOSOPHICAL TERMS

M ABOVE	PLANES OF ELEMENTAL, MINERAL, VEGETABLE, ANIMAL, NORMAL HUMAN EVOLUTION	CONSTITUTION OF MAN			THREE MORTAL BODIES
		SEVEN PLANES OF NATURE (including Mental or Astral Plane, or both)	Form Levels, or Rupa Loka		
6.	Normal Human Evolution	Astral or Kāmic Plane, or Astral or Emotional World	Higher Astral	↓ Kāma-Manas, or Human Soul	Mental Body
			Lower Astral	↑ Kāma	Astral or Desire Body, or Kāma-Rupa
7.	Planes of Elemental, Mineral, Vegetable, Animal, Normal Human Evolution	Physical Plane, or Astral World	Atomic State	↓ Kāma-Prāna, or Animal Soul	Physical Body
			Subatomic	5. Prāna (from the Sun)	
			Superetheric	6. Etheric Double	
			Etheric		
			Gaseous		
			Liquid		
			Solid	7. Gross Physical Body	

The atomic, subatomic, superetheric and etheric matters of the physical plane are also called ether No. 1, ether No. 2, ether No. 3 and ether No. 4 respectively.



THEOSOPHY EXPLAINED

IN

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

BY

P. PAVRI, B.Sc., L.C.E.

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(Revised and Enlarged)

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TABLE OF ORIENTAL TERMS

(Corresponding to previous table)

			सूक्ष्म शरीरं	सूक्ष्म शरीरं	सूक्ष्म शरीरं	सूक्ष्म शरीरं
Svarloka	(Agni Deva)					
6.	= Āpas (Varuna Deva)		Manomaya Kosha (Mind Sheath)	Sūkṣhma Sharīra (Subtle Body)	Svapna (Dream)	Tajjasa
Bhuvārloka						
7.	= Prithvi or Kṣhīṭi (Kubera Deva)		Prāṇamaya Kosha (Life-breath Sheath)	Annāmaya Kosha (Food Sheath)	Jagrāt (Awake)	Vaiśhvānara
Bhūrloka						

IN HIS NAME

FOREWORD

As beginners in the study of Theosophy ask numerous questions, an attempt has been made in this book to present the broad teachings of Theosophy in a systematic way in the form of questions and answers. The material collected here is drawn from over seventy books and pamphlets, mainly the works of that wonderful occultist, Bishop C. W. Leadbeater, and the famous President of the Theosophical Society, Dr. Annie Besant. The purpose of this book is to make the study of Theosophy a little easier in its elementary stage, before more advanced and comprehensive books, dealing with abstruse and metaphysical questions, are taken up for study.

My sincere thanks are due to Mr. Ernest Wood, Secretary, Theosophical Educational Trust, and Principal, Sind National College, and to Mr. H. C. Kumar, Vice-Principal, Sind National College, for many useful suggestions and practical help.

P. PAVRI

FOREWORD TO THE SECOND EDITION

ADVANTAGE is taken of the increasing demand for this book to revise, enlarge and bring it up-to-date.

I have to thank Mr. Yadunandan Prasad, M.A. [Cantab.], for his valuable help, as well as Mr. F. B. Patell the author of 'Theosophy' in Gujarati, which forms the basis of the earlier part of this book.

P. P.

PREFACE

EVER since the year 1875 witnessed the revival of Theosophy in the world of modern thought, particularly through the agency of the Theosophical Society, thinking people in every country have been steadily adopting its explanations of life's difficulties and mysteries. Many who have studied deeply have been convinced, by experience or thought, of the truth of its accumulated teachings, and hundreds of thousands of others of less studious disposition have come to regard them as in the highest degree probable—the safest and most reliable guide in human life. Though many of the statements with regard to such matters as the life after death, the law of justice (karma), and the pilgrimage of the soul to human perfection through repeated rebirths or reincarnations, come to us on the distinct authority of great Himalayan adepts, sages and seers, and their assistants in the outer world, supported by the teachings of many religions and the experiences of many ancient and modern mystics and philosophers of East and West, those statements are deeply satisfying to the scientific and logical mind, and the requirements of our best moral opinions and conscientious intuitions. In addition to this, many private investigators along the line of self-training advocated for those eager for direct knowledge have learned by their own immediate supersensuous experience of the truth of one or more of the facts presented to the world. The philosophy thus satisfies all the three human

instruments of true knowledge: authority, reasoning and direct perception.

Yet it is not merely a subject for philosophers and the schools. Above all, it is for "the man in the street". It brings to him that mind and heart-satisfying knowledge which makes life a perpetual joy, full of purpose and power. It makes him realise the deceitfulness of most of life's difficulties and trials, and their true place as instruments of immediate progress; so that like the swan of eastern fable, he becomes able, almost without effort, to separate the milk from the water of common life. By it he learns that both labour and unselfish love are never denied their fruits and their full satisfaction.

It is with regard to this practical aspect of Theosophy that Professor P. T. Pavri has compiled his work, so as to place the whole subject in clear and decided light before the general reader. His work has been a labour of love resulting from careful studies extending over several years in the intervals of his duties as an Engineer and later as student at Adyar and as Professor in the Sind National College. That his presentation has been eminently successful will be apparent to all who glance through the pages of the book, which is most conveniently arranged so that it is equally useful to the continuous reader and one who prefers to dip here and there.

I should strongly recommend this book also to Theosophical study groups in Lodges and elsewhere, particularly as a Theosophical dictionary or companion to be resorted to when difficulties and doubts arise. It is up-to-date, and full of useful detail.

ERNEST WOOD

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CHAPTER I

WHAT THEOSOPHY IS

Question. Is Theosophy a religion?

Answer. Theosophy is not a religion in itself, but is the truth which underlies all religions alike, the hidden root from which all the different religions have sprung. It is the same as the Gnosis of the Christians, Brahma Vidyā of the Hindus, and Sufism of the Muhammadans. "Theosophy" is made up of the two Greek words, *Theos*, a God, and *Sophia*, wisdom, and means Divine Wisdom, without the help of which it is impossible for man to know anything about the deeper and perennial problems of life.

Q. What are those deeper problems of life?

Ans. Why was the universe created, whence, how; whither does it tend; what am I, what is the purpose of my existence, what the goal; what is God and where; how am I connected with Him and the universe; what is the explanation of the apparent injustices of life; what is the meaning and the use of suffering and pain; what is luck, fate or destiny; what are dreams, and how are they caused; what is life, what death—these and many such questions which the ignorant in all ages think to be inexplicable, can be understood only with the help of Theosophy.

Q. But is it not the general belief that such things cannot be known by man ?

Ans. There is nothing in the world which man cannot understand and know ; but the reason for his ignorance of such matters is his pride, mental inertia and undeveloped intellect.

Q. But some raise the objection that the matters not dealt with in their scriptures should not be considered as true.

Ans. The fact that particular subjects are not dealt with in particular scriptures does not prove the falsity of those subjects, and so it is foolish to say that the study of Theosophical subjects, not found in particular religious scriptures, is against truth or against that religion. As a matter of fact, most of the present-day sciences are not dealt with in religious scriptures ; would it, therefore, be right to say that they should not be studied ?

Q. If Theosophy can explain the "inexplicable" mysteries of nature, how is it that so many people not only show a dislike to it, but are positively against it ?

Ans. One reason is that though Theosophy, like a river, contains shallows in which a child can wade, there are depths in it which the strongest diver cannot fathom. Thus, though some of its teachings are so simple and practical that any person of average intelligence can understand and follow them, it is not a subject to be easily grasped or understood in its higher details without special efforts. Mental inertia hates being disturbed, and selfishness prefers an easy-going lie to the greatest truth, if the latter requires sacrifice of one's smallest comfort. Then again, the unselfish code of Theosophy can appeal only to the limited few who may be prepared to lead a life of great purity. One more reason

is that Theosophy kills out superstition and bigotry masquerading as religion, and so when truths are presented which flatly contradict many of the human vagaries cherished by sectarians, they are not acceptable to those who have not made a deep study of their own religion and who naturally prefer to cling to their old beliefs. Such is human nature, and it is not easy to uproot long-cherished ideas, false though they be. Moreover, there is the unfamiliar character of the Theosophic teachings, and a glance at the history of any new thought, religious or philosophic, will show that all possible impediments have always been put in its path by those who hate innovations.

As a man makes intellectual progress, his ideas about religion undergo a great change, and his bigotry also is reduced in proportion. But bigots and fanatics of all religions who, inspite of their ignorance of even the elementary principles of other religions, consider their own particular religion as the only true one and show contempt for all others, simply proclaim their own folly. Similarly, none of those who show a dislike to Theosophy and believe it to be against their own religion, is found to have truly understood his own religion or studied even the first principles of Theosophy.

Q. Now, what are the fundamental principles of Theosophy ?

Ans. There are two such principles. The first is the Immanence of God. God is everywhere and in everything. The divine Life is the spirit in everything that exists, from the atom to the Archangel. All thought, all consciousness are His, for He is the One, the Only, the eternal Life. Thus the essence of Theosophy is the fact that man being sharer of His life can know the Divinity and is himself divine and immorta^l, nay eternal ; for immortality is only

endless time, and what in time begins, in time must end; while man is eternal as God Himself is eternal, and death is merely the dropping of one garment before donning another.

But if there be one Life, one Consciousness in all forms with God immanent in all, then as an inevitable corollary to this supreme truth comes the fact of the solidarity of all that lives, of all that is—a universal Brotherhood. The Immanence of God, the Solidarity of Man, these are the basic truths of Theosophy.

Q. Can you give a rough outline of its teachings?

Ans. Its teachings can be outlined thus:

1. That there is one eternal Infinite Reality, one incognisable real Existence.

2. That from That proceeds the manifested God, unfolding from unity to duality and from duality to trinity.

3. That the whole universe with everything within it is a manifestation of the life of God.

4. That there are many mighty intelligences called Archangels, Angels, Devas, who have come out of the manifested God, and are His agents for carrying out His thought and will.

5. That man like his Heavenly Father is divine in essence, his inner Self being eternal.

6. That he develops and evolves by repeated incarnations, into which he is drawn by desire under the law of Karma in the three worlds, the physical, the astral and the mental, and from which he is set free by knowledge and sacrifice, becoming divine in potency as he had ever been divine in latency.

7. That there are Masters, Perfected Men, Men who have completed Their human evolution, have attained human perfection and have nothing more to learn so far as our human state is concerned.

Q. What is the relation of Theosophy to the Theosophical Society and when was the latter started?

Ans. Theosophy in its teachings and ethics, though not in name, is as old as man, but the word "Theosophy" is said to date from the third century A.D. when the Eclectic Theosophical System, which later on developed into Neo-Platonism, was started by Ammonius Saccas and his disciples in Alexandria, though Diogenes Laërtius attributes that system to an Egyptian priest in the early days of the Ptolemaic dynasty.

The Theosophical Society as such was founded by Madame H. P. Blavatsky and Colonel H. S. Olcott at New York, on 17th November, 1875 A.D. In the beginning people not only did not appreciate, but even opposed this really useful movement which is designed for the spiritual uplift of humanity.

Q. *But how can you prove the usefulness of Theosophy?*

Ans. The usefulness of Theosophy lies in the true conception of the Plan of God, in the proper understanding of the purpose of life, in the sure confidence in Divine Justice, in the mental and emotional consolation, in the absolute freedom from helplessness and hopelessness, in the utter absence of fear and worry and in the opportunity of intelligent and willing co-operation with the Divine Plan and of quick attainment of the goal of human life. But the test of its usefulness lies in its adoption by sensible and intelligent people, in the consequent improvement of their conduct in daily life, and in its gradual permeation of world literature. The Theosophical Society, once started, went on expanding through its numerous branches in different parts of the world and still does so. No other system of thought whatsoever has made such rapid progress throughout the world amongst people of different religions during a period of less than fifty years.

The growth in the number of branches belonging to the Theosophical Society since its birth, as shown in the following table, proves its usefulness.

YEAR	NUMBER OF BRANCHES			
1875	1
1880	11
1885	117
1890	234
1895	401
1900	595
1905	860
1910	1223
1915	1578
1920	1923
1924	2364

Again, every member of the Theosophical Society has friends and relations who have studied the Theosophical literature and are Theosophists without being members of the Society.

Q. You said Theosophy is as old as man ; then what was the need for the starting of the Theosophical Society ?

Ans. The old truths had been forgotten and required re-proclamation. Materialism was making very rapid advances amongst the civilised nations of the West, and Science in its progress was drifting towards materialism, so much so that agnosticism was becoming the distinguishing characteristic of the scientific man who believed that beyond the senses and the intellect man was possessed of no instruments for the gaining of knowledge. Even the East, which used to be the fountain whence Wisdom sprung, was about to be swamped by the advancing wave of materialism which threatened to cover the world. And so it was thought wise to re-proclaim the eternal truth in

a new form suited to the mind and attitude of the man of the time ; but instead of revealing a new religion as so often before, the Theosophical Society proclaimed the common source of all religions, so that any man seeing that all religions are branches from a single tree and have the same teachings, may understand and derive inspiration from the inner, hidden meaning of his own particular faith.

Q. Can everyone study Theosophy ?

Ans. Of course any one can study Theosophy provided he has an open mind and an intelligently receptive attitude, and is eager in his search after truth wherever found, in whatever religion or philosophy. He should have neither the blind faith of the unintelligent and the biassed person, nor the blank and militant incredulity of the materialist. But Theosophy is not meant for those who prefer their own prejudices and preconceived ideas to truth revealed by others, nor for those bigots and fanatics who believing their own religion to be the only true one show the utmost contempt for other religions.

Q. What is the advantage of the spread of Theosophy ?

Ans. The Society has three objects, and tremendous would be the advantage if even one of those objects were really fulfilled.

Q. What are those objects ?

Ans. The first and most important object is "to form a nucleus of the universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour," and acceptance of such a Universal Brotherhood is the only condition of admission into the Society.

Q. How is it possible to have a universal brotherhood when persons of even the same religion quarrel amongst themselves ?

Ans. If the second object be understood and followed, universal brotherhood is not impossible, and that second object is "to encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science".

Q. *Wherein lies the advantage then ?*

Ans. A study of comparative religion proves that the origin and essence of all religions are the same, and that fundamentally all religions are one, teaching the same truths and inculcating the same ideals of conduct and life.

Q. *How is that possible when the different world-religions apparently differ so widely ?*

Ans. The Immanence of God is the basis of Religion, and the various religions are methods by which man carries on his search after God—and here lies the justification for variety. There are many types of mind, and different religions were planned to appeal to different races and temperaments.

Again, people are in different stages of evolution, and what suits one stage may not suit another. For example, a young or savage nation—that is, a nation whose people have not had much experience and training in a series of human incarnations, and whose chief pleasures are eating and drinking and hunting for food—would require a very simple kind of religion which would teach that there is a God who is good, that they should do right to please Him and gain happiness after death, but that if they did wrong, He would punish them and make them suffer after death.

But when the same men have passed through many more earth-lives, and have been born into more civilised nations, they would require a higher and more spiritual form of religion as they would have greatly developed their intellectual and moral faculties. By the evolution of

humanity through ages their intellect would have grown stronger and their love wider and deeper, so that they would be able to understand more of the great truths than their forefathers were ever able to do. Again, what was suited to the needs of the people even two thousand years ago obviously cannot be fully suitable for them to-day with their wider knowledge of nature.

The apparent differences between various religions are due to the national and racial characteristics and the varying stages of intellectual growth of the people concerned, as well as to the accretions of rites and ceremonies and the serious misrepresentations, distortions and wrong interpretations of basic truths taught by their Founders.

Again, Truth may be expressed in a hundred different ways, but the whole can never be fully expressed. Men are now making the discovery that Truth is infinite while creeds are finite, that just as it is impossible to reduce the illimitable to a geographical atlas, so it is vain to endeavour to encompass the whole of truth in the most elastic confession of faith. But each religion has its own characteristic perfection or key-note, its message to mankind, and the study of all religions is thus necessary to know the many-sided Truth.

Thus following the second object one sees that no one particular religion is in sole possession of truth, and so one does not feel prejudiced against other religions. Hence brotherhood is more likely to be practically realised amongst all men, as it is already a fact in nature, all being children of the same Father.

Q. You say that the essentials of all religions are the same; how so? Moreover, if Truth is found in all religions, why does it appear so dissimilar in different religions?

Ans. All religions have grown round some great Teachers—in fact their very names are taken from those Founders—like Christianity, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Muhammadanism. The Founders of religions are all Divine Men under the World-Teacher, members of a Great Brotherhood who guide mankind and are in charge of a body of teachings, called the Ancient or Divine Wisdom. When a portion of mankind is ready for some new teaching, one of the Brotherhood is born amongst them to found a new religion, who ever brings with Him the same truths, the same teachings, but shapes the form of those teachings to suit the conditions of the time, such as the intellectual stage of the people to whom He comes, their type, their needs, their capacities. “Cows are many-coloured, but the milk (of all) has but one colour. Look on knowledge as the milk, and on the teachers as the cows.” Thus owing to the common divine origin, the essentials of all religions are the same, though the non-essentials vary.

Religions are like vessels into which water is poured ; the water takes the shape of the vessels, but retains its fitness to quench thirst. So spiritual life is poured into religions, and takes shape according to the different religions—the needs of the time, the intellectual stage of the people concerned, etc.,—but remains one spiritual life all the same, able to quench the thirst of the spirit for the knowledge of God.

As one white light includes all colours within itself, so the different religions represent the varied colours which in their union form the one white ray of Truth. As water in differently-coloured glass tumblers appears differently coloured though really colourless, as the same sun seen through differently-coloured glasses appears differently

coloured, similarly the same Truth appears different owing to the outer garbs of different religions, necessary for its expression, being differently coloured according to the needs and capacities of the different types of people for whom it is primarily intended.

Each religion marks a step forward in civilisation and also brings out some feature valuable to mankind, on which less stress had been laid in the religions that preceded it. Mankind has to learn many lessons and develop different qualities which are given by special religions, adapted to emphasise particular teachings. These teachings are embodied in civilisations, and humanity, developing the qualities imparted by the civilisations and learning the necessary lessons taught by World-Teachers and incorporated in religions, gradually shows an advance, with ever-enriched qualities. Thus, though all the great truths are to be found in each faith, there is also something in each faith which dominates the rest—its central idea or key-note—giving to it its own peculiar colour and evolving in it its own peculiar characteristics.

Q. What are the central ideas, the key-notes, of the old religions so far known ?

Ans. While it is true that every religion contains some universal teachings, each is dominated by a spirit peculiar to itself. Every religion has its own note, is marked by a dominant quality or seems to have selected one virtue or truth upon which to lay special stress ; and all these notes do not sound out a monotone, but a splendid chord, when heard together.

According to Dr. Miller, the well-known Presbyterian founder of the Christian College of Madras, the contribution, as it were, of the Hindu religion to the great universal religion, is the doctrine of the Immanence of God and the

Solidarity of Man. Admitting that the universal Life lives in all humanity, the brotherhood of man is only the earthward side of that great spiritual reality ; and growing out of that recognition of the unity of man is the dominant note of social obligations, of Duty, a sense of duty between members of a community, the duty of man to man.

The teaching of the World-Teacher Tehuti or Thoth—or Hermes according to the Greek—which dominates the civilisation of Egypt is that of Science, the study of man and the worlds around him. And because its central teaching was of Light, Egypt had as the key-note of its faith Scientific Knowledge, so that the “ Wisdom of Egypt ” has come down through the ages, and even the very name of Chemistry is derived from Chem or Khem, the old name of Egypt, the land of science in the past. Thus the contribution of Egypt to the world's evolution is in the value of science and knowledge of the physical world *i.e.*, the doctrine of Law, for Law is the symbol of Knowledge as Duty is the flower of Truth.

The basis of the civilisation which the World-Teacher built up in Persia as Zoroaster is Purity, “ purity of thought, purity of word, purity of deed ”. He preached the doctrine of Fire, and took Fire as the symbol of God, because fire is the great purifier.

In Greece the Great Teacher as Orpheus gave the key-note of Beauty, the beauty which is divine ; and Beauty is the note of the Greek religion and Greek civilisation, mighty among the older civilisations of the world. Greece worked the beautiful into the lives of her people, and that beauty spoke in her wondrous literature, in her exquisite architecture, in her statues open to the masses of the people.

As Greece spoke of Beauty by Art, Rome spoke of Beauty by Law—the duty of the citizen to the community—for without Law, Beauty cannot be. Rome thought little of the individual; the State was the Roman ideal, and no true freedom for a nation can exist without the omnipotence of Law.

The central idea of the great religion founded by the Lord Buddha in India was Knowledge—right knowledge of wisdom, of compassion and obedience to law, of learning how to live and seeking in all things to understand.

The note of the Hebrew religion is Righteousness—Righteousness of God, of “the righteous Lord who loveth righteousness”.

In Christianity, the Faith on which has been built the civilisation of Christendom, two notes are struck, the one naturally following upon the other. The first is the key-note of Individualism. Older nations built their civilisations with the family as the unit and not the individual. Christianity struck the key-note of Individualism, and in order that it may be thoroughly developed, some of the doctrines including that of reincarnation, taught in the primitive Church, were wisely dropped for about a thousand years. It was necessary to build the individual, and the idea of a single life gave the individual an activity which he would not have had if he had thought that many lives stretched before him and behind him. For the last two thousand years individualism has worked its way, until in the Teutonic sub-race, individual character has become extremely self-centred, full of “I”-ness, of self-ness. This was perhaps necessary, for without this quality strongly built, there would be no foundation for a future co-operation. Truly has it been said: “You cannot synthesise weaknesses.”

Then there is the idea, not so much by precept as by the exquisite example of the Founder, that when power has been gained, it is to be used for service, that when strength has been acquired, it is noble only when it is bound to the uplifting of the weak, that knowledge and power and strength are human only when they are vowed to the service of the race, that the greatest is to be as he that does serve and that the measure of his power is to be the measure of his duty. That sounded the note of Self-Sacrifice which in time will become the dominant note of the Christian nations. Thus Christianity links to love of God the service of one's neighbour, and that has come from the lips of the World-Teacher in order that the human race may be able to step one rung further up the ladder of truth and of love. An English scientist, Huxley, catches up and proclaims the great word of a Master of Wisdom and Compassion that "the law of the survival of the fittest is the law of evolution for the brute, but the law of self-sacrifice is the law of evolution for man." Self-sacrifice, the life-note of the Lord of Compassion, the Christ, could not be understood clearly even by His earnest followers until they had developed individual strength of mind and personality. The disciple Peter furnishes an instance of this in his denial of his Lord. With a larger understanding comes the recognition of the duty of self-sacrifice, and individual duty begins to take the place of individual rights.

Muhammadanism speaks of Resignation to the will of God, and states that there is but one path to God, which is through Resignation to the Divine Will.

So looking over these religions of the world one finds that their central ideas are like the pieces of a

great mosaic and need to be put together before one can see the grandeur of the full effect, that each faith has its own note of music, and one cannot afford to lose any of the dominant key-notes, any of the jewels of the different faiths, as all the religions of the world are the intellectual presentments of the one great spiritual verity, the different colours of the one white light of the spiritual Sun of Truth.

We read in one of the Eastern scriptures, the Bhagavad-Gītā of the Hindus: "Mankind comes to Me along many roads, and on whatever road a man approaches Me, on that road do I welcome him, for all roads are Mine." That is a great truth. God is the centre, the religions are all on the circumference; and as all the radii lead to the centre, so all religions lead to God at last. What is wanted is that each one of us should deepen and spiritualise his own religion and see the essential identity of all religions, by an unbiassed study of comparative religion, assisted by the deeper truths and esoteric teachings of Theosophy.

Q. After all, cannot Theosophy also be called a religion?

Ans. Theosophy is the basis of all religions, though from a certain point of view we may think of it as a religion in itself, giving its followers a rule of life, not based on commands, but on plain common-sense proved by facts. Theosophists regulate their conduct in accordance with the Divine Will expressed in the laws of nature and avoid infringing them, not to escape the wrath of some imaginary offended deity, but to avoid bringing discomfort on themselves.

It may be called a religion also because it shows us the ordinary course of evolution, and at the same time

points out the short cut to the goal of human life through quicker progress by means of conscious effort. Further, as by a study of comparative religion Theosophy proves all religions to be identical in essence and origin, it can be called the key to all religions. It gives a common-sense explanation of matters considered as mere superstition in religions. *It has nothing to do with external ceremonies of any one religion, but is concerned only with the truth underlying them all.*

The members of the Society are not compelled to accept all the statements of Theosophy on blind faith, but are free to accept as much as appeals to them as true. That policy rests on a very sure foundation, the foundation that no man can really believe a truth, until he has grown to the extent which enables him to see it as truth for himself. A teaching is not really part of a man's spiritual life ; it comes within the mental life, into that part of his nature which is said to be knowledge, the intellect ; and the intellect is able to see only that which is akin to itself. It is the truth in a man which recognises the truth outside him, when once the inner vision has been opened. Hence one object of the Theosophical Society is the study of the great fundamental truths of all religions. No one is asked what he believes in. All are left to study for themselves. As soon as the eyes of the spirit open, a man at once recognises the truth, because the faculty of truth in his own nature tells him that it exists. He sees by it as he sees by the light of the sun. As long as a man is blind, the light of the sun is nothing to him ; but for him who has eyes, no argument is necessary to prove the existence of the light by which he sees. Hence the motto which the Society has adopted : "There is no religion higher than Truth."

Q. Does the T.S. object to its members following any particular religion ?

Ans. Certainly not. It has persons of all religions as its members. "Pure thoughts, pure words, pure deeds" being the sum total of all religions, he who practises these in one religion can be considered a follower of any other or all religions.

Q. Are there any points of difference between Theosophy and what is ordinarily called a religion ?

Ans. There are two points of difference. The first is that Theosophy does not demand blind faith from its followers. They are asked either to know a thing by experience, reasoning or intuition, or suspend judgment about it. As beginners naturally cannot know for themselves, they are asked to accept as probable the statements made by experts till they can themselves verify them and convince themselves of their truth.

The second point of difference is that Theosophy does not try to convert any man from the religion he holds and does not emphasise the superiority of one religion over others. On the contrary, it explains to him the inner and deeper meanings of statements and ceremonies of his own religion, arouses in him a deeper appreciation of his faith than what he possessed before he took up its study, teaches him to live his religion better than he did before, and in many cases gives him back, on a more intelligent basis and a higher level, the faith in it which he had all but lost.

The cardinal policy of the Theosophical Society, maintained since its inception, has been that differences of religious belief are to be respected. Finding the same great truths as to life, death and conduct enshrined in all great religions, the Society seeks to work for all religions rather

than for one. It believes that the existing faith of any particular country is, on the whole, best suited to its people, and it tries to strengthen and purify that faith rather than implant an alien faith in its stead. Thus it works in India for the revival and purification of Hinduism, in Ceylon for the cause of Buddhism, and in Europe and America for the true interpretation of the glorious religion of the Christ. As Mrs. Besant once pithily said about the Theosophical position, "Theosophy asks you to live your religion, not to leave it."

Q. Now what is the third object of the Society?

Ans. It is "to investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man". Spiritual intuitions in man have to be kept alive, and bigotry in every form—religious, scientific or social—has to be opposed and counteracted. For this purpose we have to try to acquire a knowledge of all the laws of nature, *i.e.*, invariable sequences existing in nature, and especially encourage the study of those laws least understood by modern men—the so-called occult sciences—which are really based on a true knowledge of nature, not on superstitious beliefs. Again, man has within him certain latent powers which it is the object of the Society to investigate and develop, whereby suffering may cease and peace spread throughout the world.

Q. But is not Modern Science antagonistic to Theosophy?

Ans. Theosophy or Divine Wisdom embraces all science, ancient and modern, as no knowledge can be outside Divine Wisdom. There is but one Science, so long as facts remain the same; what is strictly scientific is Theosophical, and what is truly Theosophical is entirely in harmony with all the facts, and so in the highest degree

scientific. But the fundamental difference of view between Theosophy and Modern Science is that the one concerns itself with a study of Life and of Consciousness ; the other with a study of form and of the vehicles of Consciousness, with the physical phenomena of this and other worlds and with what can be brought into consciousness through the physical brain and senses alone. Modern Science is a systematised knowledge of sense-phenomena only, and many of its conclusions are erroneous as it hesitates to go beyond the senses even where physical phenomena like sleep and trance manifestations are concerned. "In old times Religion and Science were one, wedded together, and there was no discord between the Intelligence and the Spirit." Modern Science in its self-sufficiency and materialism once derided Theosophy and was antagonistic, but materialism with its absurd theories is happily now a thing of the past, while opposition and disbelief have gradually subsided.

No fair-minded or impartial student can study *The Secret Doctrine*—that masterpiece of Theosophical teachings—without being struck with admiration at the depth of knowledge it reveals, and without observing how Modern Science is advancing on lines traced and anticipated by the gifted, though much-maligned, author of that monumental work.

Q. Then is Theosophy a Science ?

Ans. It is truly a science, because the truths it proclaims are matters not of mere theological belief but of direct knowledge acquired by study, investigation and painstaking observation. Being a Science of Life, a Science of the Soul, it teaches that the world is a manifestation of the Divine thought in all grades of matter interpenetrating one another. Man has got other bodies

besides the physical, and when sufficiently evolved by repeated incarnations can unfold new senses, acquire higher powers of mind, observe the phenomena of nature in finer matter and understand the underlying laws.

But in every science a student must be qualified to study and must have the necessary time and capacity if he wants to know at first hand. Similarly, a student of Theosophical science must have reached a certain stage in evolution and must have his physical, astral and mental bodies well purified to act as perfect instruments for research into the worlds of subtler matter. In fact Modern Theosophy is defined as a synthesis of the essential truths of religion, science and philosophy.

Q. The departments of religion and science have been explained, but what does Theosophy teach of philosophy ?

Ans. "To reach the knowledge of the One is the aim of every philosophy," said Bruno. Philosophy is the knowledge of Unity by the Reason, apart from the multiplicity of objects; Science is merely the observation of objects by means of the senses. Only he who knows the Unity is a philosopher. "Such a one," said Plato, "I esteem as a God."

Theosophy is a philosophy of life and explains that the solar system is a magnificent manifestation of the Divine Life with man as a part of it. It states that man as seen by developed faculties is not a body having a soul, but is a soul and *has* a body—in fact several bodies, to act as vehicles in various worlds. There are several worlds interpenetrating one another and simultaneously present with us here all the time, though in our waking consciousness we are aware of only the lowest world, the physical. Man progresses life after life under the laws of Reincarnation and Karma till he realises the unity of

all that is, and reaches the knowledge of the One. He is the master of his own destiny, reaping in another life as he sows in one. It also explains that thought and feeling are not aggregations of matter, but are the *causes* of those aggregations, and declares with Sir William Crookes that we must see *in* life the moulder and shaper of matter.

Q. You have posited certain things about man and his evolution, about reincarnation and karma, about the existence of the Masters, etc. Are they facts that can be demonstrated?

Ans. As a mathematician cannot demonstrate an abstruse theorem to a lad unless the latter has acquired by diligent study a knowledge of elementary mathematics, so a rigid training is necessary to perceive Theosophical teachings as facts. They are, however, laid down as facts by those who have verified them. Certain psychic faculties and spiritual powers, to be developed by training, are necessary before the facts of Theosophy can be demonstrated, though a complete verification of all facts is possible only to Perfected Men. Yet before one develops psychic powers, one can see the necessity of reincarnation, karma, the pilgrimage of the soul, the Masters, etc., by the soul's power of reasoning on the phenomena and experience of human life.

Q. Is it true that the members of your Society are all required to be vegetarians and teetotallers?

Ans. Nothing of the kind. Our Society merely expects all its members to try to serve other people and be kind and unselfish in their dealings with them. Its members should live the law of Brotherhood, the first object of the Society, and be tolerant to all religions.

Q. Then why are many of your prominent members strict vegetarians?

Ans. The study of Theosophical truths is not hindered by the use of flesh diet or alcoholic drinks. But really earnest students wish to do more than mere theoretical study. They want to study Occultism, the Secret Science which teaches the secret potency of things in Nature and develops the hidden powers latent in man. They want to acquire wisdom and power by occult study in order to help others, and to know the truth by direct personal experience and not to take it on trust.

Now the first thing an aspirant learns is the true relation of the physical body to the inner man and the *supreme importance of the latter over the physical sheath.*

Q. But how is that knowledge concerned with vegetarianism ?

Ans. The earnest student knows that the physical body must be maintained perfectly pure if a complete mastery over that body with its passions and desires is to be attained.

Again, flesh diet not only affects the physical body for the worse, but also has a coarsening effect on the man himself.

A modern scientist has shown that animal tissue, however cooked, retains marked characteristics of the animal to which it belongs ; while occult science proves that when that flesh is assimilated by man as food, it imparts to him some of the characteristics of the animal it comes from, coarsening and animalising the man. Such evil effects are greatest from the flesh of large animals, less from birds and fish and practically none from vegetables.

Even amongst animals there is a deal of difference between the herbivorous and the carnivorous. The former like cows, goats, lambs, horses, parrots, doves, etc., have pure physical bodies which look clean and delicate, so that

one is tempted to approach and caress them, while on the contrary the carnivorous animals like tigers, lions, foxes, rats, crows, etc., give out offensive smells and are always unclean. Flesh-eaters themselves, in the so-called civilised countries, do not eat carnivorous animals, because the flesh of those animals is very coarse and rank, and birds living on fish are avoided for the same reason. There is a difference even in the natures of the herbivorous and carnivorous animals, the former being gentle, and the latter ferocious. Moreover, the animals really useful to man like horses, bullocks, cows, buffaloes, elephants, goats, lambs, etc., are *practically all herbivorous*.

Besides this, a Theosophist is averse to causing pain to other creatures or injuring them, as he knows that the animal-world does not exist merely to satisfy man's cravings, but has an evolution of its own.

Q. Vegetarianism seems a beautiful theory, but is it practicable? Can a man live without flesh diet?

Ans. The objection is founded upon ignorance. Thousands and millions live without flesh as food, and it is a pity that men and women, otherwise morally clean, should be taught that they cannot subsist without the corpse of a slaughtered animal as their necessary dietary.

Q. But can you say that a vegetarian diet is superior to flesh food? If so, please give reasons.

Ans. Certainly.

1. Vegetables have more nutrition than an equal amount of dead flesh.

"It must be honestly admitted that weight by weight vegetable substances, when they are carefully selected, possess the most striking advantages over animal food in nutritive value. . . I should like to see the

vegetarian and fruit-living plan brought into general use, and I believe it will be."

—SIR BENJAMIN W. RICHARDSON, M.D., F.R.C.S.,
"Foods for Man—Animal and Vegetable—A Comparison."

There are four elements necessary for the repair and the upbuilding of the body: (1) Proteins or nitrogenous foods; (2) Carbo-hydrates; (3) Hydrocarbons or fats; (4) Salts. These elements are found in a larger proportion in vegetable than in animal tissue. Nuts, peas, beans, milk and cheese have a large percentage of nitrogenous matter. Wheat, oats, rice and other grains, fruits and most of the vegetables are mainly carbo-hydrates, *i.e.*, starches and sugars. Nearly all the protein foods and vegetable oils furnish hydrocarbons or fats; while the valuable organic mineral elements of iron, potassium, lime, soda, etc., which serve as eliminators, antiseptics, blood-purifiers and producers of a kind of electro-magnetic energy, are mostly found in the plant kingdom, the main supply coming from fruit and vegetables. Meat contains an excessive amount of acid-forming elements and needs to be combined properly with foods rich in bases of mineral nature—milk, leafy vegetables and fruits. Fruits and vegetables, owing to their alkaline contents, also aid in establishing an alkali reserve in the blood which is essential to maintain its capacity to carry carbon dioxide to the lungs for elimination.

But recently, since 1906, certain substances have been discovered in food-stuffs, in the absence of which an adequate number of calories (3,600 calories per day for an adult for ordinary mental and physical activities), supplied in the form of proteins, carbo-hydrates, fats—the three collectively being termed the "organic nutrients"—and the purifying and recuperative mineral salts, can alone

neither promote growth nor support life indefinitely. Of these necessary dietary factors, called vitamins, six are already on the map of Science. Most malnutrition is due to absence of these vitamins, and their lack in diet causes the so-called "deficiency diseases"—Xerophthalmia, beriberi, scurvy, rickets, pellagra, etc.—the diseases of malnutrition or of dietary deficiency.

Vegetables are the most important sources of vitamins in every-day diet—especially those that can be eaten raw—and the humble tomato, because of its wealth of the three main types of vitamins, is considered, along with lettuce, spinach and cabbage, one of the elect, one of "the big four" that head the vegetable kingdom. Vitamins A and B are not appreciably affected by ordinary cooking methods, with the exception of frying, provided the vegetable liquor is saved; but the anti-scorbutic Vitamin C, found practically only in fruits, tomatoes and green leaf vegetables (and partly in fresh milk), and so essential in warding off scurvy and necessary for sound bone formation and healthy teeth, is very delicate and is rapidly destroyed when foods are dried, dehydrated, preserved or canned, and also under all processes of heating unless this latter is done under pressure, in absence of air and with a short period of heating.

Milk, a "complete proteid food," is better than meat, not because its protein is superior to that of meat, but because it furnishes other valuable elements—vitamins and minerals. Thus a diet containing whole milk, fresh fruits like oranges, lemons or pineapples, vegetables—especially the leafy vegetables and salads—and bread and cereals—preferably whole wheat and other entire grain from which the outer covering has not been removed—with butter, will be an ideal one, being rich in all the

vitamins. Fruits and those vegetables which can be eaten raw have a special and very important role in nutrition as carriers of anti-scorbutic substances. Fruits and vegetables also have great value as correctives of faulty elimination, whether taken raw or cooked.

2. It causes less disease.

Flesh is affected to an enormous extent with terrible diseases like cancer, consumption, intestinal worms, etc., which are readily communicated to man. In his fifth report to the Privy Council in England we find Professor Gamgee stating that "one-fifth of the total amount of meat consumed in England is derived from animals killed in a state of malignant disease," while there is hardly a disease transmitted by vegetables.

A very large number of medical men who are progressive and who have studied the matter of "Diet in relation to health," forbid their patients to eat any flesh—not only as a means of alleviating such ailments as Gout, Rheumatism, etc., but also as a preventive of uric-acid maladies and diseases of many kinds, including Cancer, Appendicitis and Tuberculosis. Wounds heal more quickly and fever is less readily caught—and if caught, more readily cured—among people who do not eat animal corpses.

"The man who suffers from Gout, or Rheumatism is sick because he daily swallows these maladies at the dinner-table, possibly at every meal he eats. As long as a man keeps on *eating Gout*, in the shape of juicy beefsteaks and mutton chops, etc., he must expect to have painful twinges in his toes.

"Eminent French and English physicians have, in recent years, shown that a large share of the maladies from which human beings suffer are due to uric acid.

"Dr. Haig, the eminent English physician, has shown that most uric acid diseases are due not only to the

failure of the body to destroy or eliminate its uric acid, but to the introduction of uric acid with food. The following are a few of the startling facts which these investigators have brought to light.

"A pound of beefsteak contains fourteen grains of uric acid.

"A pound of liver contains nineteen grains of uric acid.

"A pound of sweetbread contains seventy grains of uric acid.

"The following list of maladies due to uric acid are copied from Dr. Haig's great work entitled 'Uric Acid and Causation of Disease':—Gout, rheumatism, headache, epilepsy, convulsions, chorea, hysteria, neurasthenia, nervousness, mental depression, lethargy, vertigo, syncope, insomnia, paralysis, asthma, dyspepsia, congestion of the liver, glycosuria, diabetes, Bright's disease, albuminuria, dropsy, gravel, and calculus, neuritis, retinitis, cerebral and spinal degeneration, local inflammations of all kinds, appendicitis.

"The above maladies are due to eating uric acid and it is evident they cannot be cured while a person continues to eat the uric acid by which they are produced.

"A person's liver and kidneys may be able to destroy and eliminate the uric acid produced in his own body, while not at all prepared to deal with five, ten or twenty times the quantity."

J. H. KELLOGG, M.D.,

Medical Superintendent of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, Michigan.

"To-day, there is the scientific fact assured—that Man belongs not to the flesh-eaters, but to the fruit-eaters. To-day, there is the chemical fact in the hands of all, which none can gainsay, that the products of the vegetable kingdom contain all that is necessary for the fullest sustenance of human life.

"Flesh is an unnatural food, and, therefore, tends to create functional disturbance. As it is taken in modern civilisation it is affected with such terrible diseases (readily communicable to man), as Cancer, Consumption, Fever, intestinal worms, etc., to an enormous extent. There is

little need for wonder that flesh-eating is one of the most serious causes of the diseases that carry off ninety-nine out of every hundred people that are born."

JOSIAH OLDFIELD, D.C.L., M.A., M.R.C.S, L.R.C.P.,

Senior Physician, Lady Margaret Hospital, Bromley.

"Seventy-five per cent. of the most terrible diseases under which we suffer (they are not, in fact, diseases at all, but poisonings by unnatural foods), our increasing insanity, our increasing cancer, our debility, and our deterioration, may be due, not improbably, to the neglect of Nature's teaching. And Nature says, in a way that there is no misunderstanding, that Man is a frugivorous and not a carnivorous animal."

ALEXANDER HAIG, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P (1906).

3. It is more natural to man whose teeth have not the slightest resemblance to those of carnivorous animals, and whose alimentary canal seems better adapted for vegetarian than for meat diet.

"Man is a frugivorous animal, and neither his internal organs, his teeth, nor his external appearance, resemble in any way those of carnivorous animals."

"The body of Man and that of the anthropoids are not only peculiarly similar," says Haeckel, "but they are practically one and the same in every important respect. The same 200 bones in the same order and structure, make up our inner skeleton; the same 300 muscles affect our movements; the same hair clothes our skins; the same four-chambered heart is the central pulso-meter in our circulation; the same 32 teeth are set in the same order in our jaws; the same salivary, hepatic and gastric glands compass our digestion; the same reproductive organs ensure the maintenance of our race."

PROFESSOR J. HOWARD MOORE,

(Chicago University), "The Universal Kinship."

"Man resembles no carnivorous animal. There is no exception, unless Man be one, to the rule of herbivorous animals having cellulated colons. The orang-outang perfectly resembles Man both in the order and in the number of his teeth.

"The orang-outang is the most anthropomorphic (man-like) of the ape tribe, all of whom are strictly frugivorous. There is no other species of animals which live on different foods in which this analogy exists."

PROFESSOR BARON CUVIER,

"Leçon d'Anatomie Comparative."

4. It gives greater strength.

Flesh-eaters boast of their vigour of body, but they have not the endurance of vegetarians. The former may do a large amount of work for a short time when well-fed, but soon get hungry and weak, while the latter can endure long periods of work under the most trying conditions.

"A series of experiments were made at Yale University by Prof. Irving Fisher, in 1906 and 1907, to test the relative endurance of flesh-eaters and flesh-abstainers. Forty-nine subjects were used, the flesh-eating ones being athletes, and much care was used to obtain exact evidence, with the following results:—

In the contest of holding the arm extended, the *maximum* limit of the flesh-eaters (22 minutes) was barely more than half the *average* of the abstainers, one of whom held out for 160 minutes, another 176, and yet another 200 minutes.

In deep bending of the knee the average of the flesh-eaters was 383 times, and that of the abstainers 731 times.

Similar experiments made at Brussels University at about the same time revealed the same facts, and demonstrated an average superiority of 50 per cent. in labour and endurance capacity in favour of the vegetarians. And the dynamograph recorded that in the case of the latter only one-fifth of the time was necessary for recovery from fatigue as compared with the time required by the flesh-eaters."

Charles Darwin wrote, "I have always been astonished at the fact that the most extraordinary workers I ever saw, the labourers in the mines of Chili, live

exclusively on vegetable food, including many seeds of leguminous plants."

(DARWIN'S LETTERS)

"Meat is absolutely unnecessary for a perfectly healthy existence, and the best work can be done on a vegetarian diet. . . . It is being realized that every means should be resorted to so as to prevent the accession of disease rather than merely attempt to cure it when it comes, and the Vegetarian Movement will, I think, do a very great deal towards this."

PROF. G. SIMS WOODHEAD, M.D., F.R.C.P., F.R.S.,
Professor of Pathology, Cambridge University.

"That it is easily possible to sustain life on the products of the vegetable kingdom needs no demonstration for physiologists, even if a majority of the human race were not constantly engaged in demonstrating it, and my researches show not only that it is possible, but that it is infinitely preferable in every way, and produces superior powers both of mind and body."

ALEX. HAIG, M.D., F.R.C.P.,
"Uric Acid in the Causation of Disease."

"As a medical man I desire to add my testimony both from the results of personal experience, and from observations throughout many years of hospital and private practice. I maintain that flesh-eating is unnecessary, unnatural and unwholesome."

"That it is not necessary for the highest development of mind and body is proved by the phenomenal success achieved by vegetarian athletes, and by the numerous instances of celebrated philosophers, writers, and scholars, both ancient and modern, known vegetarians."

"The habit is *unnatural*, for it is a violation of the Law of our being. Man is created a frugivorous, or fruit-eating creature. This scientific fact is evident from a comparison with the carnivorous animals, from whom he differs completely in respect of his internal organs, teeth and external appearances; whereas, anatomically, he is most intimately allied to the anthropoid apes, whose diet consists of fruits, cereals, and nuts."

"That the eating of the dead bodies of slaughtered animals is *unwholesome* is abundantly evident from the wide-spread disease which results."

JOHN WOOD, M.D. (OXON).

5. It produces less animal passion.

Flesh diet intensifies man's lower nature and produces a craving for strong drink, which in turn increases animal passions.

As a practical proof of the superiority of a vegetable diet over flesh-food the following instance is quoted :

"For six months during 1908, 10,000 children in London were provided with vegetarian meals by Miss F. I. Nicholson, Secretary of the London Vegetarian Association, and at another kitchen provided by the London County Council a meat diet was provided for the same number of children; at the end of six months the children of both parties were examined by medical men, and it was proved that the vegetarian children were better in health, heavier in weight, firmer in muscle, and clearer of skin than the children fed on meat diet.

"Many thousands of the poorest children of London are now fed on vegetarian diet by the London Vegetarian Association under the superintendence of the London County Council, and at their request."

Then there is the question of cruelty to animals, the sin of slaughter and the degradation of the slaughterman. He who feeds upon dead flesh encourages that work and has his share in that horrible guilt.

Thus we can understand how unclean flesh-eaters must be in spite of their external wash of the body and their scented clothes.

Q. If you do not consider mere washing of the body and putting on of clean clothes as cleanliness, what would you call real purity ?

Ans. Of course external wash and clean clothes are necessary, but these things alone do not constitute purity.

The physical body of man is only one of his seven constituents, while the skin of the body is not even the hundredth part of that body; then how little can the whole body, much less the whole man, be considered clean by simply washing the skin? That body alone can be called pure, the whole of which, including blood, muscles, bones, etc., is composed of pure particles. But if it be made a graveyard by introducing corpses of dead animals into it, it can never be really clean.

"The lamp burns bright when wick and oil are clean." Flesh-food makes the physical body a worse instrument, and puts difficulties in the way of the soul by intensifying undesirable passions and emotions.

It is true that the purity of the heart and of the soul is more important to a man than that of the body. Yet that is surely no reason why we should not have both. There are quite enough difficulties in the way of self-control, and we need not go out of our way to add another to the list. Although a pure heart will do more for us than a pure body, yet the latter can certainly do a great deal, and we are none of us so far advanced along the road towards spirituality that we can afford to neglect the great advantage that it gives us.

Q. If, according to modern theories, everything is living, why may we not as well eat animals as vegetables?

Ans. For the obvious reason that animals have a very sensitive nervous system, and vegetables have not. And would not the cannibal, if he could, add man to the list and pertinently ask a similar question: "Why may we not as well eat men as animals and vegetables?" The life in the tree is not sufficiently unfolded to be conscious of pleasure or pain, except in a very general way; a vague pleasure is felt in sunlight and rain; a vague pain in

drought. The vegetarian takes living things as his food just as does the flesh-eater, for all things live; but he chooses the living things which do not suffer pain in being used as food. So also, though we constantly breathe in myriads of living creatures, they are none the worse for their sojourn in our lungs.

Q. But we see in nature that bigger animals live on smaller ones, big fish on small fish; then wherein lies the objection if man, too, follows that rule and lives on animal flesh?

Ans. You cannot apply the laws of animal nature to man. Though a strong animal kills a weaker one and makes it its food, you cannot accuse it of murder, but a man following a similar course will render himself liable to punishment. Similarly, a dog or a cat eating its own young ones does not commit sin nor is it punished. The responsibility of good or evil is proportionate to intellectual and moral development, and so animal laws cannot apply to man.

Q. But many of our ancestors lived on meat all their lives and were no worse; then why should we try to improve on them? Does not nature intend man to be carnivorous?

Ans. There are man-eating savages even now in some parts of the world, and they may with equal force bring forward the same argument, inasmuch as the flesh of man seems so delicious and natural a diet to them. Some people eat crickets, rats and other insects and animals which look to us so loathsome. Similarly, the devouring of dead flesh, though natural and pleasant to some, seems to others disgusting and opposed to the law of mercy.

As seen before, the scientific world is being more and more convinced of the fact that "man belongs not to the flesh-eaters, but to the fruit-eaters," though the human

alimentary system seems so adapted as to enable man to live either on flesh or vegetable food whatever be provided for it. But even if we cannot lay it down that nature intends man to be either carnivorous or frugivorous, it seems that he is intended to make changes in his customs and habits as he advances in intellect and spirituality and understands the distinction between right and wrong. *A wrong thing does not cease to be wrong because many do it. Man is defined as a thinking animal, and he should not give up his right of independent judgment, but should apply the test of common sense to all affairs of life. A habit or custom proved by increase of knowledge and experience to be wrong or pernicious is a bar to higher life and detrimental to human progress.*

Not only does flesh diet make the physical body a worse instrument for man, but the man by thus introducing loathsome impurities into it builds for himself a coarse and unclean astral body also with strong animal passions. As he has to live the first part of his life after death in that astral body, it follows that he will have to suffer acutely from the working out of those passions.

So instead of feeding on flesh merely because our forefathers did it, we should consider it our duty to live on vegetarian diet when knowledge and common-sense prove it to be purer, healthier and better suited to man.

Again, man's body is a temple of God, and should not be made a graveyard. None of the occultists, prophets or other light-bringers has ever lived on this disgusting diet or commended its use as food. Amongst the thousands of reliable witnesses to the sufficiency and superiority of fruitarian diet are to be found the following well-known names:—Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Hypatia, Iamblichus, Diogenes, Plutarch, Seneca,

Buddha, Zoroaster, the Christian Apostles—James, Matthew, James the Less and Peter—the Christian Fathers—Tertullian, Origen, Chrysostom, Clement and others—Milton, Isaac Newton, Benjamin Franklin, Nelson, Wellington, Shelley, Paley, Wesley, Swedenborg, Newman, Michelet, Annie Besant, Bernard Shaw, Edison, General William Booth and W. Bramwell Booth.

Q. But it is said that those who give up meat-eating grow ill and have again to resume that diet. Why is it so, and what should they do?

Ans. Not only has each one of us his own individual consciousness as "I," but each atom, each molecule, each cell in our body, has its own individual consciousness. The "I" in us is conscious of the body as a whole, but not of the cells individually. Similarly, the cells have no consciousness of the dweller in the body. Now if these cells be trained along a particular line or be given a particular habit or tendency, they go on acting accordingly till actively prevented. This is due to what is called the "unconscious memory of the cells," and so if the cells of the whole body are given a particular tendency, that becomes a habit with them. Physical tricks of manner are formed in this way and are difficult to get rid of when once acquired. Similarly, a child trying to learn to write will have the same trouble either with the right or with the left hand, but when once it has learnt to do so with either hand, that hand starts writing as soon as the pen is held, which cannot be said of the other hand which has not got that tendency. Thus the difficulty of breaking the meat habit is easily explained. When foolish parents thrust morsels of that detestable stuff into the mouths of children, the children first show a natural dislike, but when the cells of the body are regularly taught to obtain

nutrition from such matter, they get a tendency along that line, acquire the habit and demand the same impure stuff. When children thus brought up later on find out their mistake and want to give up flesh diet, they are put to great trouble, as the cells of the body habituated to that evil tendency revolt against the change, and the physical body sometimes even breaks down under the stress of the unsatisfied cravings.

But that does not mean that flesh diet is necessary. When by persistence or repeated efforts those cells become habituated to vegetarian diet, they leave off their old evil tendency and get accustomed to the new diet, until the man, who was once heartily fond of flesh food, now not only shrinks from the very smell of it, but comes to enjoy a vegetarian diet even more heartily. Also, in many cases people who become vegetarians suddenly, find a marked improvement in their health.

“ I have seen children of all ages who have been accustomed to eating meat, and who have suddenly come under conditions where no flesh-food was given. I have seen young men and middle-aged men, some of whom had been abstemious livers, and some of whom had been luxurious *bons vivants*, and who immediately and entirely gave up meat altogether and all with the happiest results.

“ I have had under my observation those who for 60 to 70 (and in one case for 75) years had lived on the ordinary dietary, and who at a single stroke had all meats and meat extracts and gravies cut off, and in not a single instance could I say that I ever saw any injurious result following, whereas in the majority of cases I noticed an improved vigour, while a sense of lightness and freedom was experienced, just as if some weight or burden had been removed from the vitals.

“ If I am asked ‘ Did these people who gave up eating meat lose tone or become weaker ? ’ my answer would be that in the majority of cases they confidently

stated that they found themselves stronger and more powerful in body, and clearer and more vigorous in mind."

JOSIAH OLDFIELD, D.C.L., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.,
Senior Physician of the Lady Margaret Fruitarian Hospital, Bromley.

The safe way, however, to change over from meat eating to a meatless diet is to cease from it gradually. One should first drop pork in every way, shape and form. A heavy meat eater, one who eats meat three times a day, should eat it only twice a day for a fortnight ; thence once a day for a fortnight, then once a day every other day for a fortnight, then twice a week for a fortnight, then once a week for the same length of time, and then drop it.

Sometimes people when they begin to be vegetarians misunderstand the whole business. As meat is gradually eliminated, what is to take its place? Most people commence at once to eat an increased quantity of bread, porridge, cakes, pies, and everything containing sugar. With the loss of the meat stimulation comes a craving for something to take its place. Tea, coffee and sugar seem to meet the demand to a nicety, and they are indulged in. The body commences to pile on fat, often there is illness, in almost every case there is digestive disturbance more or less serious, the results of which do not appear for a long time. Again, the idea of some English people who have been living principally on meat with cabbage and potatoes is to give up meat and live on cabbage and potatoes. Now potatoes being all starch, and cabbage mostly water, they could not live on starch and water, but must have other flesh-forming foods. Recent books on the subject of diet tell us what amount and what proportion of different kinds of food are needed, how much of the flesh-forming, bone-forming and blood-forming foods are necessary, carbohydrates, proteins, etc. They also give

long lists of foods, though only some of them may suit particular bodies, and a person wishing to live on vegetarian diet should find by trial what would suit him best. If he finds some difficulty with his digestive organs, he is taking the wrong kind of food. He should try other things and unless he is hopelessly diseased, he will always find a way out. Uncooked vegetables and fruits are recommended. The utmost care should be taken to avoid any increased consumption of starchy foods, sugar, tea or coffee. Salads of uncooked vegetables should take the place of the missing meat, and uncooked fruits should be eaten freely. Whole meal bread only should be used.

Q. If a man be suffering from a fatal disease or a chronic illness, and the only remedy is flesh food, may it not be taken under medical orders ?

Ans. The question is based on an unlikely or impossible assumption. It is like asking : " If a square were round, how many corners would it have ? " There is no illness for which the eating of flesh is the only remedy. In fact, flesh diet is never meant as a remedy for any illness. The giving of flesh in serious cases by European doctors is generally a sign that the patient is beginning to recover. Even if such a case as is assumed in the question be at all possible, the person concerned should take into consideration his duty and his position in spiritual evolution. A Sanyāsi or a spiritually evolved soul might let his body die under such conditions, whereas an ordinary man of the world would wish to preserve it.

In case of a serious or chronic disease, with medical advice to take meat, the patient should change his doctor instead of his diet. Doctors differ as much as laymen, and we should choose a doctor whose opinions on these

matters do not clash with our own. Many prominent doctors all over the world have come to the conclusion that meat-eating is at the root of most diseases, and are substituting for it a non-meat diet. As stated before, meat produces great quantities of uric acid, and this causes consumption, gout, and many other serious diseases.

Q. Then you also eschew wines and narcotics ?

Ans. Alcohol in any form has a directly pernicious effect on certain centres in the brain and does a man more harm than even meat, as it hinders the development of his inner powers and stunts his moral and spiritual growth. All narcotic drugs are similarly injurious, though less so than wines or spirits.

Q. Is it true that your rules require the members to remain unmarried ?

Ans. We require nothing of the kind as there is perfect individual freedom of opinion and action in our Society. Moreover, only very few can have complete control over their passions, and discouragement of marriage means increase of immorality.

Again, a married man has to look after and maintain his family, whereby the quality of unselfish love is developed within him life after life, so much so that later on he learns to labour for and love the whole world. On the contrary, he who refrains from marriage is ordinarily wholly absorbed in self-interest, and is consequently likely to develop the base quality of selfishness ; so a married life is advisable for all ordinary men who, though earnest and ardent workers for Theosophy, have still ties binding them to the world. But for him who has for ever done with worldly life, who desires only to know truth in order to help others and who is most earnest to gain his end, celibacy is generally

advisable, because just as one cannot serve two masters, it is impossible for such a man both to pursue occultism and lead a worldly life. If he tried to do this, he would fail in doing either properly. Hence celibacy is desirable and even necessary for the few who are determined to tread the path which leads to the highest goal. Marriage is also incompatible with some special forms of Yoga—the systems which seek an expansion of self-consciousness above the physical state—and men and women who want to practise those must become celibates. On the other hand, there are cases in which marriage is necessary to provide bodies for certain types of soul or to perpetuate some useful race or family. Moreover, if occultists were married to occultists, they would help rather than hinder one another.

Q. We find more misery than happiness in the world ; then why should we waste our time and energy in the study of Theosophy instead of utilising them for new researches and inventions which may alleviate a little of the great misery of the world ?

Ans. All the 'pain and misery in the world can be classed under three heads: 1. *Ādhyātmic*, 2. *Ādhibhautic* 3. *Ādhidaivic*.

The first includes all pains of body and mind ; the second all pains and miseries caused by theft, by the ravages of tigers and other wild animals, by bite of serpents and poisonous insects as well as by accident or breach of trust ; while all kinds of unhappiness brought about by natural causes such as the sun, electricity, earth-quake, cold, heat, wind, rain, etc., are included in the third.

All the miseries in the world fall under one or other of these three classes. Now if we take the first

class, *viz.*, the afflictions of body and mind, we find that in spite of thousands coming out as medical men and inventing new specific cures for all diseases to which flesh is heir, we have not yet been able to exterminate bodily suffering. Even if the whole of humanity turn its attention to medical science, we cannot abolish all bodily and mental diseases, because some of them are congenital, like congenital insanity or congenital blindness or deafness or lameness, and no physician can ever cure these.

Coming to the pains of mind, non-acquisition of a thing desired, contact with undesirable objects, loss of a desired object or of a friend or a dear one by death, are some of the causes that produce such pains, and what power have we to overcome them? Even supposing that all pains and afflictions mentioned under the first heading are guarded against or removed, what security can we have against pains and miseries caused by the other two sources, *i.e.*, by wild animals or poisonous insects, by theft or breach of trust, by sunstroke or lightning, by scarcity of rain and consequent famine, etc.?

Q. How, then, can we rid the world of all kinds of pains, miseries and diseases?

Ans. There is only one remedy and that is knowledge.

Q. But how can we guard against and prevent bodily disease, snake-bite, sun-stroke, accidental death, congenital disease, etc., simply by knowledge?

Ans. It is clear that to cure a disease after getting it is something like trying to extinguish a fire after it has started, and just as the fire is bound to do some damage however quickly it may be put out, diseases once contracted are bound to give some pain however quickly they are cured. Again, we have no power to prevent the recurrence of diseases. Just as by eating, hunger is only

temporarily satisfied, and is felt over again after a time, so nearly all the present-day cures are meant for diseases after they have come and are in no way preventives or remedies against their invasions.

Till we know the root-cause of all the pains and miseries of the world, we cannot put an end to them; our time is taken up merely in fighting the diseases after they have started. This does not imply that the treatment of diseases is useless. On the contrary, it is as necessary to treat a disease as it is to put out a conflagration. But rather than be continually putting out a fire in a haystack started by a child playing about with a match-box, it is better to remove the cause—the child or the match-box. Similarly, it is obviously better to remove the cause of disease or evil in the world and thus put an end to all misery.

There is a law of cause and effect in the world, which means that there can be no effect without a cause. Now if we know the cause which produces pain and misery, we can by removing that cause, put a stop to and prevent all the pain and misery of the world.

Q. But how is it possible for us to know the cause?

Ans. The root of all evil and misery is ignorance. Lord Buddha said that all suffering came from ignorance; “Dispel ignorance, make men wise, and then all difficulties will vanish.” Says a Master of the Wisdom: “Those who are on His (God’s) side know why they are here and what they should do, and they are trying to do it; all the others do not yet know what they should do, and so they often act foolishly.” The ordinary man has no idea of the laws of nature in the physical world, much less in the mental and moral worlds. Not knowing who he is and what his true happiness consists in, he foolishly goes after the wrong thing and in consequence suffers pain and misery.

So until he has acquired a knowledge of the laws of life and nature by the study of Divine Wisdom or Theosophy, he is not likely to be free from pain and suffering.

Q. How will Theosophy help me in acquiring a fuller knowledge of the laws of life and nature and why should I be a Theosophist ?

Ans. As explained before, Theosophy is a synthesis of religion, philosophy and science. Science has made much progress in the past, but now is practically at a deadlock. Theosophy can help it with an intelligent theory of the universe from the primary substance, the objective universe with its countless lives and related to man by means of his body and the senses, the seven planes of nature, etc. Thus Theosophy, the Science of the Soul, takes the scientific student by the hand and leads him along new avenues of thought.

Then also Theosophy is the basis of Religion and the Philosophy of Life. We see all kinds of social problems—extreme poverty and extreme riches, desperate misery and heart-rending degradation, side by side with great progress in science and arts. The teachings of Theosophy explain the root-causes of evil and point out the sure way of escape.

“ Ten Good Reasons for Theosophy ” are sometimes given as under :

1.—It solves the Riddle of the Universe : harmonising the facts of Science with the fundamental truths of Religion.

2.—It proves life worth living, by rendering it intelligible, and demonstrating the justice and the love which guide its evolution.

3.—It removes all fear of death, and much of its sorrow ; recognising birth and death, joy and sorrow, as alternating incidents in a cycle of endless progress.

4.—It insists upon the optimistic view of life; proclaiming man the Master of his own destiny; child of his past; parent of his future.

5.—It demonstrates the Power, the Wisdom, and the Love of God; notwithstanding all the sorrow and misery of the world.

6.—It brings hope to the hopeless; showing that no effort is ever wasted, no error irretrievable.

7.—It proclaims the Fatherhood of God; hence the Sonship of Man, and his ultimate attainment of perfection.

8.—It declares the universality of the Law of Causation, maintaining that—"whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," in this, and in all other worlds.

9.—It regards the world as a school to which man returns again and again until all its lessons are acquired.

10.—It affirms the Brotherhood of man; and provides a basis of union for all who desire to work for its realisation.

"Theosophy gives Science new realms to conquer; it lifts the hopelessness from social conditions; it shows the way to perfect self-sacrifice; it teaches Reincarnation, Karma and Brotherhood. These are some of the reasons why you should be a Theosophist."

Q. But one can be a Theosophist at heart, study Theosophy and also serve humanity in all possible ways without joining the organisation. Wherein, then, lies the advantage of becoming a member of the Society?

Ans. Persons should come into the Society not "to get" but "to give"; to become co-workers with God by spreading on every side the light of the knowledge they have gained; to toil, to work for the future, and by the realisation in their hearts of what is coming, help to make it come more quickly; to be enrolled amongst the Servants of Humanity who are working for the coming recognition of a spiritual Brotherhood amongst men.

Thus it is a privilege to join the Society, and work for the Society is its own reward, while the opportunity grasped now will give a member a larger opportunity for unselfish work in the future. This in itself is a great personal gain to a member who in addition becomes part of a living organism and shares its life, which is of a higher order, both in quality and quantity, than his own life as an individual. In other words, his consciousness becomes linked with that of the leaders of the movement and through them to the Masters of the Wisdom, the real founders of the Society.

Again, the practical application of Theosophy is philanthropy, and the true Theosophist is ever a philanthropist. Now, people dissipate their energies and do not succeed in breaking down a wall in front of them when each individual is knocking independently at a different place. But work is more useful and effective when carried on with concerted effort by a group or a society than when undertaken by independent individuals, and the problems of the spiritual and social progress of the world can be dealt with much better by such a Society under the guidance of the Great Ones than by individual men, however sincere and well-intentioned they may be.

Many could not help coming into the Society, for they have in the past taken great pains to study the Ancient Wisdom and laboured and worked for the dissemination of spiritual knowledge. Their brains may not remember, they may not be aware of it, but their ego knows and in their superconsciousness that knowledge resides. The proof that the memory is there, that the consciousness is awake on the higher planes, lies in the fact that, unlike otherwise clever people who feel a sort of intellectual vagueness in the study of Theosophy, they are able quickly

to grasp all the main Theosophical principles, and feel like traversing old ground, reviving ancient memories of the knowledge imbibed in the past. Law is law ; opportunities earned cannot be withheld ; and it was their good Karma to join the Society, as in the past they had won the right to come into it, and by past well-doing had merited the present privilege of again spreading the Theosophical knowledge.

“ Of perfect service rendered, duties done
In charity, soft speech, and stainless days :
These riches shall not fade away in life,
Nor any death dispraise.”

One chief value of membership in the Society lies in the insight it gives a member into certain fundamental truths—laws of reincarnation and Karma and brotherhood of man—knowledge of which makes for contentment and hopeful endeavour, ignorance of which leads to misery and despair. Of course, knowledge is valueless save as it is transmuted into service, and membership in the Society, meaning added knowledge through the companionship of others who know, emphatically means increased and more effective service.

A man by joining the Society may be able to serve as a channel through which spiritual life may be poured into the religion to which he belongs, and may thus be honoured by being used by the Guardians of Humanity in Their great work of quickening evolution and of lifting the world.

A Great Teacher once said that in all the world there are only two kinds of people: those who know and, because they know, are working ; and those who do not know and are therefore idle. But only that knowledge which is woven into life, which is acted upon, whose precepts

are practised, is real knowledge. As a man lives the truths, they become part of him. Outsiders may profess belief in the principles of Theosophy and may yet rest content with that belief. But, like "Handsome is that handsome does," a "Theosophist is who Theosophy does," and members of the Society, having accepted the first object—Universal Brotherhood of humanity,—must try to make themselves instruments of *impersonal* help in all departments of life ; they must be in the forefront of all movements striving to spread brotherhood, become sources of true spiritual happiness to their fellow-creatures and bring enlightenment into people's lives ; in short, they must strive to school themselves by actual service to be instruments in the hands of the real Founders of the Society, the Masters of the Wisdom ; and thus their membership protects them against their lower nature of sluggishness and indolence in the work of practical brotherhood and the welfare of humanity.

Members of the Society, all the world over, have the same ideals and beliefs, and these naturally bind them into a close friendship. From this friendship there grows a great co-operation, and with co-operation comes a realisation of their strength. For the Society is like a great power-house and has behind it a great force, both spiritual and temporal, for the helping and guiding of humanity ; and membership in the Society confers the privilege of wielding that power and of being one of the guiding and spiritualising forces of the world.

A few members of the Society grouped together form a centre through which the Masters work, for One of the Greatest of Them has said : " Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Thus They are always ready to give of Their

power and strength where a pure channel is made, and membership in the Society provides such a channel for Their blissful influence and offers to the members an unequalled opportunity of doing Them true and laudable service by acting as an instrument ready to Their hands, an instrument self-conscious yet readily adaptable—men who realise themselves as a connected unity and whom They can use in Their great work of the spiritual regeneration of humanity.

Finally, if a member truly in earnest cares, in the ways of inner purification and outer unselfish action, to commit himself to be a disciple of one of the Great Ones, he will find his life utterly changed and will discover a new world of spiritual experience opened before him, because whatever the struggle before him, he never ultimately fails, because in all circumstances of life he no longer does his chosen work alone, but under the guidance and blessing of an invisible Teacher and Friend, under the direction of an invisible Captain and Guide.

The Great Ones want workers, and *some* must be Their agents and helpers in the lower worlds. Why should it not be *you and I* who may serve Them in Their grand and glorious work of the spiritual and social progress of the world and the evolution of mankind?

CHAPTER II

GOD AND THE SOLAR SYSTEM

Question. Do you believe in God ?

Answer. If you mean an extra-cosmic and anthropomorphic God, or if you think that the relation between God and the universe (or our world) is as that between the potter and the pot, such a God we absolutely deny for several reasons. First, He is called by His devotees infinite and absolute. Now form implies limitation, a beginning and an end ; and if God be infinite, limitless and absolute, how can He be thought of as limited to a form ? Secondly, if He be limitless, He must be everywhere ; and if He be everywhere, He cannot create an external universe, for where lies the space for creation ? Thirdly, thinking and planning is necessary before creation, but how can the Absolute think, because thinking implies a relation with something thought of, limited and finite ? Fourthly, a creator must make some movement in space to create a universe, which seems impossible for the Infinite who is already everywhere. Fifthly, if God is separate from His universe, that is, if God is one thing and the universe something else, like the potter and the pot, whence did God bring the material for creation when it is believed that there was nothing but God in the

beginning ? Therefore we cannot believe in such an ultimate extra-cosmic God.

Again, God is called all-just and all-merciful on the one hand, and on the other He is believed to be the dispenser of gloom and glory, of pain and happiness to mankind. But if one person leads a happy life from birth to death and another has to suffer all through his life, at the sweet will of God, such a God can either be only all-powerful (without being just) or all-just (without being powerful).

Moreover, some people who profess to believe that God is all-mighty, at the same time believe that Satan must be the cause of all misery and pain in the world. But if so, it implies that such a God is powerless against Satan, and consequently not all-powerful.

Once again, God is called all-knowing or omniscient, that is, knower of past, present and future. In the same breath it is said that His own angel went against Him and turned Satan. This suggests that God had not the prescience to know that His own angel would go against Him, and consequently He cannot be called all-knowing.

Yet again, God is considered to be infinite and omnipresent, but He is expected to be seen and met with in heaven only. These two things seem incompatible. If infinite or without form or limit, how can He be in heaven alone, or sit or stand at any particular place ? Such a God seems merely to be the creation of the imagination of the childish and the thoughtless, and is a philosophical and logical absurdity.

Q. Then please explain your conception of God.

Ans. We believe in the One Existence, the One who is the centre of all life ; an Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless

and Immutable PRINCIPLE, on which all speculation is impossible ; the One only without a Second ; One Infinite Eternal, Changeless Existence ; the All ; one Eternal Now without past, present or future ; out of space and time, the Unmanifested Logos ; Boundless Space—Zarwāné Akrané—of Zoroastrianism ; the Ineffable Thrice-unknown Darkness of the Greek Orphic System ; called by the Hindus, Parabrahman—the Supreme Brahman ; Param-ātman—the Supreme Self ; also the Nirguna Brahman—the Brahman without attributes or the unconditioned Brahman—to distinguish the unmanifested state of Brahman, the All, from the manifested state, in which Brahman is called the Saguna Brahman—the Brahman with attributes, or the conditioned Brahman ; Brahman revealed—the Supreme Ishvara with His universe.

From That all comes forth ; to That all returns. That includes within itself all that ever has been, is, and can be. As a wave rises in the ocean, a universe rises in the All. As the wave sinks again into the ocean, a universe sinks again into the All. As the ocean is water, and the wave a form or manifestation of the water, so is there one Existence, and the universe is a form, or manifestation, of the Existence. “ All this verily (is) Brahman.” Thus all universes rise and fall in the All, are born and die in His immensity.

Q. Then does the One without a Second build our Solar System ?

Ans. No, not directly. Coming forth from the depth of the One Existence, a Logos, by imposing upon Himself a limit, becomes the manifested God, and tracing the limiting sphere of His activity outlines the area of His universe. The manifested and the unmanifested are merely “ the two states of Brahman ”. This manifested

Logos is not "a Second," but "The One" in manifestation, the Saguna Brahman, the Brahman with attributes, mentioned above, the Cosmic Logos, the Supreme Ruler of the universe, the self-existing One, the Root and Cause of all beings, also sometimes called Puruṣoṭtama, the Supreme Spirit, The Self. With Himself as Spirit He reveals the other side of the All, which is named Mūlaprakṛiṭi, the Root of Matter. He manifests a part of Himself, establishes the universe with a portion of Himself, all-transcending, all-embracing, the manifested God, limiting Himself by manifestation. He then unfolds Himself into a threefold form, the three great Logoi of cosmic evolution, so that Trimurti or Trinity is the aspect towards the universe of the Manifested God.

Associated with the work of the Cosmic Logos in the Universe are seven Embodiments of His nature, called the Seven Cosmic Planetary Logoi. All the stars in the universe, which are centres of great evolutionary systems, belong to one or other of these great Seven, and are in some way expressions of Their life, as They in turn are expressions of the One Life of the Cosmic Logos.

In the One Existence are innumerable universes ; in each universe countless solar systems. Each solar system is energised and controlled by a mighty Being, Ishvara, the Solar Logos, the Solar Deity. As a Star, the Lord of a System among the myriads of stars, He lives and moves and has His Being in His Father-Star, one of the great Seven ; yet does He mirror directly the Life and Light and Glory of the One without a Second. He is to that system all that men mean by God. He permeates it ; there is nothing which is not He. He is immanent in every atom of the system, all-pervading, all sustaining, all-evolving. He is in everything, and everything is in Him.

Out of Himself our Solar Logos has called our solar system into being, and we who are in it are evolving fragments of His life; from Him we all have come; into Him we shall all return.

Yet He exists above His system, living a stupendous life of His own among His Peers—other Solar Logoi, Brother-Stars of His Company. “Having pervaded the whole universe with a fragment of Myself, I remain.” Of that higher life of His, we can know nothing, but when He puts Himself down into such conditions as are within our reach, His manifestation is ever threefold. In the evolution of any solar system, three of the highest principles of the Logos of the system (generally called the three Logoi of the system) correspond to and respectively fulfil the functions of the three Great Logoi of cosmic evolution. And so the manifestation of the Logos of our system is threefold; three, yet fundamentally one; three Persons (for person means a mask), yet one God, showing Himself in those three aspects which are but facets of Him. Thus there is a very real meaning in the insistence of the Christian Church that “we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the substance”—that is to say, never confusing in our minds the work and functions of the three separate Persons (literally—masks) or manifestations, each on His own plane, yet never for a moment forgetting the Eternal Unity of the “substance,” that which lies behind all alike on the highest plane.

The aspect of Ishvara in which He creates the worlds is named Brahmā by the Hindus, and the Holy Ghost by the Christians. That aspect in which Ishvara preserves and maintains the worlds, is named Vishnu by the Hindus, the Son by the Christians. The aspect

in which He dissolves the worlds when they are worn out and of no further use, is named Shiva or Mahādeva by the Hindus, the Father by the Christians.

Next below the Solar Deity, yet also in some mysterious manner part of Him—like the Cosmic Logos and His seven Embodiments, the seven Cosmic Planetary Logoi—come His seven ministers, the seven expressions of His nature, the seven channels of His inexhaustible Life, called the seven Solar Planetary Logoi or the Planetary Spirits. In Hinduism they are called the seven Prajāpatis (Lords of Creatures), in Zoroastrianism the seven Amesha Spentās (Immortal Holy Ones), in the Hebrew and Christian tradition the “Seven Spirits before the throne of God”. The energies of these Seven control and direct all that takes place within the solar system. They are the rulers of the planets Vulcan, Venus, Earth, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune. Each of the Seven is the Head and Ruler of hierarchies of creative entities who work under His direction in the building and sustaining of the solar system; under each are ranged Devas or Shining Ones or Angelic hosts, called Ādityas, Vasus, Dhyān Chohāns, etc., in Oriental religions, or Angels, Archangels, Thrones, etc., in the Christian tradition—manifestations of the One, the innumerable ministers of the Supreme Will.

Presiding over our world there is a great Official who represents the Solar Deity. He is the true King of this world, in absolute control of all evolution that takes place upon our planet, and under Him are ministers in charge of different departments.

Thus the God we believe in, the Supreme Lord of our system, manifests Himself in the system under a triple form, a Trinity; the Regenerator, the Preserver, the

Creator; spoken of by the Theosophist as the First, the Second and the Third Logos; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit of the Christian; Shiva, Vishnu and Brahmā of the Hindu; the Kether, Binah and Chochmah of the Hebrew Kabbalist; Ahura, Mazda and Ahura-mazda—the Life, Wisdom and the One Existence—of the Zoroastrian. He is everywhere and in everything, and is everything. The whole world is but a manifestation of Him. He is manifested in countless forms, in countless grades of living intelligences who all come forth from Him, as later on from Him come forth vegetable, animal and man. Thus there is only the One Life manifested in infinite forms. Man, vegetable, mineral, are all expressions of that Life. The grain of dust could not be, were God absent from it; the loftiest Archangel is but another expression of Him, of the One. Thus God being immanent in all, all are sharers in one Life and form one great Brotherhood.

Q. Can the existence of God be proved?

Ans. No purely intellectual process of reasoning affords a complete demonstration of the existence of God, satisfactory to all minds. That existence can be proved indirectly by reason, devotion and purity of life. Long and careful study of nature proves the probability of a 'Divine Architect' who builds the worlds; the One Existence is seen to be a philosophical necessity, and the manifestation of the primal Duality—Pratyagātmā and Mūlaprakṛti or the root of Spirit and the root of Matter—a cosmic necessity; Pratyagātmā emotionally contemplated, is God, the Supreme Lord.

Devotion to God enables a man to feel His existence, and to gain strength and peace from Him. As a man grows purer, nobler, more loving, he begins to know

God, and no more needs proof of His existence than he needs proofs of the light by which he sees.

But the ultimate and direct proof lies in the Self within. His "only proof is the consciousness in the Self". Each of us is quite sure that he himself exists; thus we have many existences, each sure of itself; but these cannot arise severally and independently, any more than a fountain can spring up in the air where there is no water; these selves arise from 'One Self, are parts of One Self, and that Self is God. Hence is the conviction of the Self His only proof, the realisation of the Divine in us, our true Self, that recognises the Divine Self without us by identity of nature. Thus only by realising the Divine Self in ourselves can we know the Divine Self outside ourselves, the Self in which 'we live and move and have our being'.

Q. What is the object of God in creating the universe?

Ans. The term "creation" is popularly used in modern days to mean making something out of nothing—an impossible feat. "The unreal hath no being; the real never ceaseth to be," says Shri Krishna in the most famous jewel of Aryan literature, the Bhagavad-Gītā. This idea of creation arose in an unphilosophic age among ignorant people. In older days that which is now called creation was regarded as rearrangement—the rearrangement of existing matter into fresh shapes, and such terms as the Heavenly Builder, the Great Architect, the Fashioner, the Artificer, the Worker, were used instead of Creator. The word 'creation' is still used in this sense of shaping anew what exists, when it is said that an artist "creates" a picture or a statue.

That emanation, not creation, is a manifestation of Divine Life, the natural expression of a phase of the

Divine Nature. The question 'what is the object of emanation,' has been answered in various ways. There are many possible reasons, but a kitten cannot understand why a man spends his time reading a book instead of running after a leaf on the ground, because the consciousness of the kitten is not developed enough to read a book ; and we are all nearer to the kitten than to God in one sense, that is, in our comprehension of His nature. Still, some say that the love of God wanted to bring to self-consciousness many beings able to share His bliss and love ; some say that Love desired to be loved. The Christians say that it is to show forth His glory. The Sufi says : " He was a hidden treasure and desired to be made manifest." The Upanishat says : " He willed : I will multiply." The final answer seems to be that in the Universal, the All, all universes, everything that was, is and can be, exist eternally ; but that in time and space, one or another universe appears and then disappears. " God " is the manifested, the Saguna Brahman, or the Ishvara, the Lord of a universe, and He gives objective existence, in time and space, to part of that which ever is, in eternity. What seems certain is that the object of man being here is to unfold his capacities and to reflect the Divine perfection—to reach " the measure of the stature of the Christ ".

Q. How is our solar system formed ?

Ans. At the earliest point of history that we can reach, the opposites of spirit and matter, of life and form, are already in full activity. What we commonly call force and matter are in reality two varieties of spirit at different stages in evolution. The ultimate root-matter as seen at our level is what scientists call the æther of space ; in Theosophical studies it is spoken of as *Koilon*, " the emptiness," the primordial negation of matter, because to

every physical sense the space occupied by it appears empty. This substance, perceptible only to highly developed clairvoyant power, originally filled all space, but some Being, infinitely higher than our Solar Deity, changed this condition of rest by pouring out His spirit or force into a certain section of the matter, a section of the size of a whole universe. The introduction of that force formed within the æther an incalculable number of tiny spherical bubbles, spoken of in *The Secret Doctrine* as the holes which Fohat digs in space. Each "bubble" or point of light is where *Koilon* is not; each bubble is in reality a point of His consciousness, and persists only so long as He wills to keep back the enveloping Koilon. These bubbles are the ultimate atoms, final units, of which what we call matter is composed; and thus matter is nothing but holes in æther.

When the Solar Deity begins to make His system, He finds this material consisting of an infinite number of tiny bubbles ready to His hand. He first defines the limit of His field of activity, a vast sphere with a circumference far larger than the orbit of the outermost of His future planets. Within the limit of that sphere He sets up a kind of gigantic vortex, sweeping together all the bubbles into a vast central mass—the material of the nebula that is to be. Acting through His Third Aspect He sends forth into this stupendous revolving sphere seven successive impulses of force, gathering together the bubbles into ever more and more complex aggregations, as explained in the Three Great Outpourings in Chapter VIII. In this way are formed seven gigantic interpenetrating and concentric worlds of matter, all one in essence because built of the same kind of matter, but differing in their degree of density. These seven types of matter or kinds of atoms are freely

intermingled, so that specimens of each type would be found in the smallest portion of the sphere taken at random. The grossest of these seven kinds of atoms—the ultimate physical atoms—are then drawn together into certain aggregations, thus making a number of different kinds of what may be called proto-elements, and these again are joined together into the various forms which are known to Science as chemical elements.

This process extended over long periods of time, but as ages rolled on, the stage of a vast glowing nebula was reached. As the sphere cooled, still rapidly rotating, it flattened into a huge disc and broke up into rings surrounding a central body which later on formed our sun. The Deity then set up in the thickness of each ring a subsidiary vortex, collecting therein a great deal of the matter of the ring which formed a planet round the central body. The collision of the gathered fragments having caused a revival of the heat, the resulting planet was for a long time a mass of glowing gas, but gradually it cooled once more until it became fit for human habitation.

Each of the planets of our solar system is thus composed of seven types of atoms, aggregations of which yield the seven fundamental types of matter found in the system, each denser than its predecessor, and called planes of nature.

Q. Ordinarily we know of only three states of matter, solid, liquid and gaseous. Then what are these seven kinds, and what do you mean by planes of nature ?

Ans. What we usually call solid, liquid and gaseous are merely substates or subdivisions of the lowest, the physical kind of matter. The whole matter of the solar system is made up of seven types of atoms of varying densities, from the grossest to the rarest, and each ring with its matter

composed of a particular type of atoms and correlated with a distinct stage of consciousness is called a plane or world, and hence we recognise seven such planes in the solar system.

Q. What have these planes to do with our earth and how is our earth formed ?

Ans. These seven types of matter interpenetrating one another are partly aggregated into planets, worlds or globes, and are not evenly spread over the whole area of the solar system. The three finest do spread over the whole, and are thus common to the system, but the four denser kinds compose and surround the globes and planets. The earth we live on being one of those planets, the seven kinds of matter make up its constitution.

Q. Then is not our earth formed of mere physical matter ?

A. Our earth is not built up only of the matter of the lowest or seventh plane or world, but has also an abundant supply of the matter of the sixth, the fifth and other worlds. Particles of matter even in the hardest substance never actually touch one another, as has been fully proved by men of science. The atoms are extremely minute in proportion to the spaces between them, each being like a solitary speck of dust in a large hall. So all the other kinds of atoms of all those other subtler planes have ample room, not only to lie between the atoms of the denser matter, but also to move freely among and around them. Consequently the globe upon which we live is not one world composed of matter of one type only, but seven worlds made up of matter of different types, interpenetrating one another and all occupying the same space.

Q. How can different kinds of matter occupy the same space without displacing one another ?

Ans. That is possible owing to the space between the atoms always being proportionately much larger than the size of those atoms. Take the example of a sponge or a cloth-ball dipped in water. The solid matter of the ball or the sponge occupies a certain space, but all the holes or interspaces in that sponge hold water, and thus water practically occupies the same space as the sponge. At the same time minute particles of air are held suspended in the water, and thus the solid, liquid and gaseous matters occupy the same space in that sponge.

Q. Where are these different planes located on our earth?

Ans. The subtle worlds are all around us, though we are normally unconscious of their existence. They are not one over the other like the layers of an onion, but are contained one within the other, the solid physical earth being embedded in the very heart of them all. The sixth world is larger than the seventh—the physical—and extends much farther into space, but at the same time permeates the physical matter of the earth everywhere. The fifth extends beyond the sixth, but permeates the other two like water vapour spreading through the air. Thus the world in which we live is not one world, but seven interpenetrating worlds all occupying the same space except that the finer kinds of matter extend further from the centre than do the grosser kinds.

Q. How are these seven planes or interpenetrating worlds named?

Ans. The highest or the subtlest region is called the Mahāparanirvāṇic, or the Ādi or the Divine. The second is named Paranirvāṇic or the Anupādaka, also called Monadic, because therein dwell the sparks of the divine Life, the human Monads, it being the birth-place and

habitat of the human Self, the Monad, the God in man. The third is called the Nirvānic or the Ātmic, as the highest spirit in man—Ātmā—as now constituted, functions in it. The fourth is the Buddhic or the Intuitional world, the world of the highest intuitions. The last two are also called the spiritual planes, for there the man realises himself as divine. The fifth, still more dense is called the Mānasic, the Intellectual, or the mental, the mind of man being formed of the matter of that plane. The sixth is the Astral or the emotional and passional world, because the emotions and passions of man cause undulations in its matter; the seventh is the physical world, part only of which we cognise with our senses. Of the above planes the two highest cannot be touched by man at present, as we have to be self-conscious only on the other five to reach our goal as Perfect Men for our present age or dispensation.

Each of these planes is again subdivided into seven and has seven substates of matter.

Q. How is each plane subdivided and what are those substates of matter?

Ans. Each plane is divided into seven subdivisions, thus having seven substates of matter.

The physical plane has seven subdivisions, represented by seven degrees of density of matter. Rising from the gross to the subtle, the matter of those subdivisions is called solid, liquid, gaseous, etheric, super-etheric, sub-atomic, and atomic. The four finer kinds of matter are made up of what is ordinarily called ether of four densities or grades, ether itself being physical though invisible to the normal human eye. All these substates of matter belong to the physical plane only. The finest or the ultimate physical atoms of the atomic subplane aggregate into what are

called proto-elements, and the latter again join together into various forms known to science as chemical elements.

The astral plane is similarly divided into seven, but has two main divisions, the lower astral having four subdivisions and the higher astral the remaining three.

Similarly, the fifth plane, the mental, has two main divisions, the Rupa Loka and the Arupa Loka, or the Form Level and the Formless Level, with four and three subdivisions respectively. It includes, though it is not identical with, what is called Devachan or Devaloka, the land of the Gods, or the heaven. Devachan, the state of happiness, bears that name because of its nature and condition, nothing interfering with it to cause pain or sorrow. It is a specially guarded state into which positive evil is not allowed to intrude, a blissful resting place for man to peacefully assimilate the fruits of the past physical life.

The other planes are also similarly subdivided into seven each.

Q. Are the different worlds or planes as well as the subplanes composed of different kinds of matter?

Ans. Each world has its own type of matter, the matter of the atomic sub-plane, and has also its own substances or aggregations of that matter arranged into seven sub-states; but any type of matter is formed out of the grossest matter of the world next above, and thus the matter of which all the interpenetrating worlds are built is essentially the same though differently arranged and of different degrees of density.

Q. Please explain this in detail as far as the physical world is concerned.

Ans. Formerly it was believed by Science that chemical atoms were the ultimate units of all physical forms; but later on they were found to be complex structures, so

much so that Sir William Crookes in a remarkable paper read before one of the English scientific societies advanced the theory of a primitive substance, named protyle, underlying physical matter of all kinds, while now the existence of electrons or ultimate particles is the prevailing belief of Science.

Any physical object, normally visible, expands by the application of heat which increases the vibrations of its compound molecules, and after a certain point breaks up and passes from its normal condition to that next above it. Thus any substance can be transformed from the solid to the liquid condition (*i.e.*, can be melted, like ice into water) and from the liquid to the gaseous (like water into steam) by increasing the vibrations of the compound molecules till they are shaken apart into simpler molecules, and this process of changing from one substate to a subtler one can be repeated by certain methods for any physical substance till that substance is finally reduced into ultimate physical atoms. The reason is that though all forms of the first or atomic subdivision are built by the compression into certain shapes of the physical atoms (typified for the moment by bricks), to make the matter of the next lower or second subdivision a certain number of the physical atoms (or bricks) is first gathered together and cemented into small blocks of four atoms (or bricks) each, or five or more atoms each, and these blocks used as building-stones; while for the next lower or third subdivision the building-stones are formed by several of the blocks of the second subdivision cemented together in certain shapes, and so on to the lowest.

Thus all physical substances, gross or fine, are found to be made up by different arrangements and combinations of ultimate physical atoms; and the latter

being all identical, except that some of them are positive and some negative, any substance can be transmuted into another by first reducing that substance into ultimate physical atoms and then rebuilding those atoms by a different arrangement into the other substance, thus transferring alchemy from the realm of superstition into that of reality.

The ultimate physical atom can again be broken up by certain methods into the matter of the grossest subdivision of the astral plane. Similarly, the finest or ultimate astral atom can be broken up into atoms of the grossest subdivision of the mental plane.

Q. If these seven planes exist all round us, why are we not normally conscious of their existence ?

Ans. Man becomes ordinarily conscious of anything only with the help of one or more of his five senses, but obviously he can be nothing but unconscious of the existence of a thing which he can neither see, nor smell, nor taste, nor touch, nor hear. Even in case of things physically gross enough the senses cannot be entirely relied on for several reasons :

1. Owing to long distance ; the planet Neptune is not seen, though it exists.

2. Owing to close proximity ; the collyrium in the eye.

3. Owing to weakness of senses ; sounds are not heard owing to deafness.

4. Owing to minuteness ; water particles in the surrounding air.

5. Owing to the predominance of another thing still greater ; the planet Mercury is not seen in the light of the sun.

Q. Then how can the existence of things not cognised by the physical senses be proved ?

Ans. It can be proved by the acquisition of superphysical powers at present latent in man. If science has made so much progress when only the three lowest substates of the physical plane are known, it can make immeasurable progress for the good of all if a knowledge of even the fine ethers be acquired, thus fulfilling, though only in part, the third object of the Society.

Q. *This merely carries the difficulty a stage further back. How can you prove the existence of supernatural powers in man ?*

Ans. There is nothing supernatural as everything takes place within the domain of natural law.

Hypnotism, mesmerism, clairvoyance, telepathy, etc., are now facts acknowledged by the scientific world. A 'subject' made artificially clairvoyant in his sleep by a hypnotist is able to see anything in any part of the world, which he cannot do by means of the physical eye, and this proves the existence of some 'superphysical' power. Again, researches in spiritualism prove the existence of the astral plane and the survival of man after death, though neither can be sensed by sense-organs.

Moreover, we are conscious of the effects of only a few sets of vibrations in air or ether, and these we call sound, electricity, light, etc., while we are oblivious of the existence of innumerable other kinds of vibrations producing other sounds, colours, lights, forms, etc. This again is admitted by science.

Theosophy has proved on the strength of actual experience that in every man there are some inactive senses which, when stimulated, can make investigation possible into the realm of matter normally lying unperceived around us.

Occultists there have been and are, who by developing their superphysical senses have investigated the etheric part of our world and other higher realms, and their investigations are priceless in their value to humanity.

Again, there are Masters, Perfected Men, who have fully awakened Their subtle senses as They have completed Their human evolution and remain in touch with the world only to assist humanity in its growth; and Their disciples also awaken and develop subtle senses one after another under Their directions and verify Their statements.

Q. I understand that the world we live in is not one world, but seven interpenetrating worlds of finer and finer matter all occupying the same space; but you have added that the finer kinds of matter extend further from the centre than the grosser kinds do. Then how far does the matter of the subtler worlds extend?

Ans. The matter of the astral world stretches to a little less than the mean distance of the moon. Thus the two physical globes—the earth and the moon—being about 239,000 miles apart, their astral spheres touch each other when the moon is at a point in its orbit nearest the earth, *i.e.*, in perigee, but not when she is most remote from the earth or in apogee. The mental world is a still larger sphere of mental matter, while with the higher globes we have spheres large enough to touch the corresponding spheres of other planets of our Solar System.

Q. If these planes or worlds cannot be ordinarily known to us, what have we to do with them?

Ans. We have regularly to come into close contact with at least some of them at our present stage, but to understand that we must know something of the constitution of man as explained in Chapter III.

such evolution as may come to him, is to unfold all his latent powers. For the purposes of human evolution the true Self, the Monad, manifests himself in lower worlds. He clothes himself in garment after garment, each of which is made of matter belonging to a definite region of the universe. Thus the Self is enabled to come into contact with each region and thereby to gain knowledge of it. At the present stage of human development, human evolution takes place only in five out of the seven planes of nature.

Q. But if the Monad stays all the while in the Monadical or Anupādaka world, how can he manifest himself in the lower worlds?

Ans. When the Monad descends one stage and enters the spiritual world, he shows himself in three aspects, of which the first, remaining always in that world, is called Ātmā or Spirit in man. The second manifesting itself in the Intuitional or Buddhic plane is spoken of as Buddhi or Intuition in man, while the third, showing itself in the higher mental plane, is called Manas or Intelligence in man. This threefold manifestation of the Monad on the three levels, showing itself as Ātmā-Buddhi-Manas, or spirit, intuition and intellect, is called the ego or the Individuality, and this ego is the man during the human stage of evolution in the world of manifestation or the five-fold universe, and is described as a seed, a germ of divine Life, containing the potentialities of his own heavenly Father, his Monad, which are to be unfolded into powers in the course of evolution; he is the nearest correspondence, in fact, to the ordinary conception of the soul. The ego takes upon himself a vehicle, called the causal body, built of the matter of the higher mental plane. Thus man as we know him, though in reality a Monad residing in the monadic world, shows himself as an ego in the higher mental world,

through a vehicle called the causal body, formed of three higher subplanes of the mental world.

Now the ego before descending to the physical world has to pass through the lower mental and astral worlds, and in doing so draws round himself veils of the matter of those planes, which are later on formed into the mental and astral bodies. Only after having assumed these intermediate vehicles can he come into touch with the baby physical body and be born into the physical world, living his physical life and working there to gain knowledge of it. At the end of his life, when the physical body is worn out, he reverses this process of descent, drops first his physical body and centres his life in the astral body in the astral world, later casts that vehicle aside and stays in the mental world in the mental body for a long time, and when that too is cast aside, is once more the ego in his own world. After a time he again repeats the process of descent into denser matter, and assumes once more a mental, an astral and a physical body.

The ego grows, but otherwise lives unchanged till he attains his goal of being merged into divinity. He is not affected by births and deaths, but living on in the permanent causal body from life to life, retains the memory of the experiences of all his personalities; what is commonly spoken of as a lifetime is merely a day in his real life, and the physical body which is born and dies, is simply a garment put on for the furtherance of his evolution.

This, then, is the real constitution of man. He is a Monad, a Spark of the Divine, and of that Monad the ego, clothed in the causal body, is a partial expression, formed that he may enter evolution and return to the Monad with developed qualities and knowledge acquired through experience. The ego in his turn puts down part of

himself, called a personality, which again wears three bodies, the mental, the astral and the physical. Therefore when we think and say that we know a man on the physical plane, it would be a little nearer the truth to say that we know a thousandth part of him. The ego is a part of the Monad, somewhat in the proportion of an ear to the whole body, and the personality again being a part of the ego, what we usually think of as the man is merely a fragment of a fragment of the real man.

Thus that part of the Individuality or the Ego, also called the "Higher Self," which is manifested in a reincarnation, at a given time, in a particular race, and either as a man or as a woman, is the personality or the "lower self". The relation between the individuality and the personality has been expressed by many symbols, one being that of a string of pearls, where the string represents the individuality, and the pearls the separate personalities in successive incarnations. One personality only, however, is made by the individuality for the purpose of the work to be done in one incarnation, and that personality at rebirth takes a new mental, a new astral and a new physical body.

Each of these bodies, again, has a life and consciousness of its own, quite distinct from the life and consciousness of the personality which uses the bodies. This 'body-consciousness' of the mind-body is known as the 'mental elemental,' that of the astral body as the 'desire-elemental', and of the physical body as the 'physical elemental.'

Q. Please explain first, what are the mental and astral elementals?

Ans. The matter of the mental and astral bodies is not dead matter. In fact, there is no such thing as 'dead

matter ' anywhere within our ken ; for all matter has been vivified by the First Outpouring from the Third Aspect of the Logos, while all forms are also ensouled and further vivified by the Second Outpouring, which is generally called 'elemental essence,' but which is often described as monadic essence, especially when it is ensouling the atomic matter of each of the planes on its downward course (see the Three Great Outpourings, Chapter VIII). The body-consciousness of the mental and astral bodies, called respectively the mental and astral elemental, is the life of the elemental essence of the mental and astral matter in their respective vehicles. In the cell-life which permeates them there is as yet nothing in the way of intelligence, but there is a strong instinct always pressing in the direction of what is good for its development.

What the elemental essence needs for its development is vibration ; for it grows, as we ourselves do at a much higher level, by learning to respond to impacts from without. The living essence in the matter of the mental body is therefore always reaching out for varieties in vibration and has the strongest possible objection to being held down for a long time to one definite rate. This we find to be the case in our endeavours at concentration, when something within us seems constantly to impel us to wandering thought and vigorously to resist our effort to hold it down to one definite line.

The life animating the matter of which mental and astral bodies are built is upon the downward arc of evolution, moving downwards or outwards into matter, so that progress for it means greater materiality, *i.e.*, descending into denser forms of matter and learning to express itself through them. Unfoldment for the man is just the opposite of this ; he has already sunk deeply into matter

and is now rising out of that towards his source—rising from the material to the spiritual, and responding only to the more delicate vibrations of high aspirations. There is consequently a constant conflict of interests between the man within and the life inhabiting the matter of his vehicles, inasmuch as its tendency is downward, while his is upward.

The astral elemental, (*i.e.*, the life animating the molecules of matter in the astral body,) also called desire-elemental, desires for its evolution such undulations as it can get, of as many different kinds as possible, and as coarse and as strong as possible. Its evolution, like that of the mental elemental, is by vibration, and vibration in the astral plane is always the result of passion or emotion of some sort. The next step in its evolution will be to ensoul physical matter, and become used to its still slower oscillation; and as a step on the way to that, it desires the grossest and strongest of the astral vibrations. It cannot be said to possess any intelligence, because it is not yet even at the level of a mineral. Yet it has an extraordinary power of adapting itself to its surroundings, and extracting from them what it needs, which certainly does sometimes look very much like a partial intelligence or very keen instinct.

The life in the mass of molecules in the astral body has a sense, though a vague one, of itself as a whole—as a kind of temporary entity. It does not know that it is part of a man's astral body; it is quite incapable of understanding what a man is; but with its curious instinct it realises in a blind way that under its present conditions it receives many more waves, and much stronger ones, than it would receive if floating at large in the atmosphere, in the general sea of essence outside. Then would it catch only

occasionally, as from a distance, the radiation of man's passions and emotions; now it is in the very heart of them, it can miss none, and it gets them at their strongest. Therefore it feels itself in a good position, and makes an effort to maintain that position of advantage. The particles of the astral body are perpetually being thrown off and changed, just as is the case with particles of the physical body; but nevertheless the feeling of individuality is communicated to the new particles as they enter, and the essence which is included within each man's astral body undoubtedly feels itself a kind of entity, and acts accordingly for what it considers its interests.

These interests, as previously stated, are usually diametrically opposed to those of the soul. Hence there is a perpetual struggle between the two, *i.e.*, the desire-elemental and the soul, or, as St. Paul describes it, "the law in the members warring against the law of the mind". But it goes further than this. The entity finds involved within itself finer matter of some sort—the matter of the man's mental body; and it comes to feel that if it can contrive to involve that finer something in its own undulations, they will be greatly intensified and prolonged. Since astral matter is the vehicle of desire, and mental matter the vehicle of thought, this instinct, when translated into our language, means that if the astral body can induce us to think that *we* want what *it* wants, it is much more likely to get it. Thus it exercises a slow steady pressure upon the man, a kind of hunger on its side, but for him a temptation to what is coarse and undesirable. If he be a passionate man, there is a gentle but ceaseless pressure in the direction of irritability; if he be a sensual man, an equally steady pressure in the direction of impurity.

That pressure which is neither the prompting of his own nature, nor a temptation of an imaginary devil, is natural, not to the man but to the vehicle which he is using; its desire is natural and right for it, but harmful to the man. Hence it is necessary that he should resist it. It ought to be rather humiliating to allow himself to be defeated or to be used as a tool by something which is not even a mineral yet. But if he does so resist, if he declines to yield himself to the feelings suggested to him and to gratify the lower desires, he gradually changes the astral elemental essence within him and builds quite a different creature—a different entity—because the coarse particles within him which need those gross vibrations become apathetic for lack of nourishment, and eventually atrophy and fall out from his astral body, and are replaced by other, higher and finer particles, whose natural wave-rate is more nearly in accordance with that which the man habitually permits within his astral body.

This gives the reason for what are called promptings of the lower nature during life. If the man yields himself to them, such promptings grow stronger and stronger until at last he feels as though he could not resist them, and identifies himself with them—which is exactly what this curious half-life in the particles of the astral body wants him to do. But if he controls his desires and lives the Theosophical life, he will close his present incarnation with a very much better type of desire-elemental than what he brought with him at birth, and will consequently commence his new incarnation with a much finer type of that elemental. The astral elemental also plays an important part in the life of a man just after death, as described in Chapter VI.

Q. What, now, is the physical elemental, and what are its functions and nature ?

Ans. The body-consciousness of the physical body—the physical elemental—is the life of the mineral, vegetable and animal streams of life which make up the physical body. That body is built up of cells, each of which is a tiny separate life animated by the Second Outpouring, (mentioned in the Three Great Outpourings in Chapter VIII) which comes forth from the Second Aspect of the Deity. All cells combined together into the body serve as vehicle of a loftier form of consciousness than any which they know in their separated lives. This consciousness, limited as it is, is sufficient for the purposes of the life and functions of the physical body. It is this physical body-consciousness—physical elemental—which attracts the attention of the individual when there is need for it, *i.e.*, urges him to rest when the body is tired, or creates in him the desire for food and drink when the body is in need of those things. The body with its physical elemental is also clever enough, through long ancestral habit of heredity, to protect itself ; when attacked by disease germs, it marshals its army of phagocytes to kill them ; when scratched or cut or wounded, it hurries the white corpuscles to the spot to try to build together new cells ; when the physical body is asleep and tenantless, with the owner away in his astral body in the astral world, it pulls up the bedclothes to cover itself against the cold, or turns over to rest in a new position.

Many of these manifestations of the physical elemental are natural enough, and need not be interfered with by the consciousness of the tenant of the body ; but sometimes such interference is necessary, as when there is work of danger to be done, and the elemental, fearing for

*its life, wants to run away, and yet must be held to its task by the will of the owner ; or when a duty has to be performed and the body is tired and objects, and yet must be forced to work. A Master of the Wisdom says: " But the body and the man are two, and the man's will is not always what the body wishes. When your body wishes something, stop and think whether *you* really wish it. . . . When there is work that must be done, the physical body wants to rest, to go out walking, to eat and drink ; and the man who does not know says to himself : ' I want to do these things, and I must do them.' But the man who knows says : ' This that wants is *not* I, and it must wait awhile.' Often when there is an opportunity to help some one, the body feels : ' How much trouble it will be for me ; let some one else do it.' But the man replies to his body : ' You shall not hinder me in doing good work.' "*

In children, the physical elemental is most pronounced ; when a baby cries and screams, it is the elemental, and not the soul of the baby, that gives expression to its objections, which, though reasonable to it, are often unreasonable to us.

Q. But why does the real man want so many bodies or vehicles ? Can he not work without these coverings or garments ?

Ans. These different garments are necessary for the development of the ego, because through these specialised organisms of matter alone is he able to receive vibrations to which he can respond, and thereby unfold his latent faculties. To acquire full consciousness in any given world, *i.e.*, to perceive and respond to all vibrations in a world, he must make a connection with it through a garment of the matter of that world. There are different worlds or planes of nature, as explained before, and the

real man wants different bodies to work in those different regions. Think of the different material vehicles a person requires to travel in by land, sea or air. On land he has to use a train or carriage of some sort ; on water a ship is necessary, while in the air a balloon or an aeroplane is required. In these cases though the vehicle is changed to suit the requirements, the person himself remains the same.

During our waking hours we work through our physical body, but in sleep we temporarily slip out of that body every night and go about in the astral world in the astral vehicle. When we die, we leave behind us for good the physical body and work in the astral plane with the astral body. Similarly, the mental and causal bodies are required for work—concrete and abstract thoughts—in the lower and higher mental planes respectively. Of course under the cover of these wrappings the light of the real man, the individual, is greatly obscured. Just as the light of a lamp appears dim and of a dull colour when we put a chimney, a globe and a coloured shade round the flame, so the real man, though a Spark from the great Flame which is God, appears quite different when clothed in so many coverings, and shines out with more or less of his brightness according as the bodies he puts on consist of finer or coarser materials.

Q. Tell me something about each of these bodies. First, what is the causal body, and why is it so called ?

Ans. The causal or the intellectual body, the body of Manas, the form aspect of the individual, of the true man, is the permanent vehicle of the ego in the higher mental world and consists of the matter of the first three subdivisions of that world. Everything woven into it endures. It is the treasure-house in which are stored up all the

experiences acquired during life in the three planes—the physical, astral and lower mental worlds.

It is called the causal body because in it reside all the causes which manifest themselves as effects on the lower planes ; because in it lies the cause of our slower or faster progress, as it is upon the treasure stored in this body that we have to depend for our character and capacity each time we take a new birth on earth. When the individual takes on a new set of bodies for his next stay on earth, he draws from the storehouse of the causal body higher powers of heart and mind than were his during the last life, and during the new incarnation he will build up still higher qualities and pass them on to enrich his causal body.

Q. What is the shape and use of the causal body ?

Ans. This soul-body, so called because the soul of man—an individual and permanent Consciousness—lives in this body, is a human form, neither of man nor of woman with sex characteristics, but more of the angel of tradition. It is surrounded by an ovoid of fiery, luminous matter, yet delicate as the evanescent tints of the sunset. This form, called the Augoeides, and the ovoid of luminous matter surrounding it, make up the soul's permanent habitation, the causal body ; and in that body the soul lives, undying and eternal.

To a clairvoyant this body appears as an ovoid surrounding the physical body and extending to a distance of some eighteen inches. In the early stage of a 'young soul,' or a primitive man differing little from the animal stage he has left behind, the causal body is small, almost colourless, resembling a bubble or a delicate film and grows very slowly. Its matter, the matter of the higher mental world, is not active until the advancement of the man

gradually stirs it into alertness by vibrations from the lower bodies ; but when the man reaches the stage of abstract thought or unselfish emotion, the matter of the causal body being aroused into response, the rates of undulations show themselves in that body as colours, so that instead of being a colourless empty film it becomes a shining globe of light, full of glorious colours and delicate hues, flashing out rays of love and helpfulness in all directions.

As the man begins to develop in spirituality, or even higher intellect, the real individual—the ego—begins to have a persisting character of his own, apart from that moulded in each of his personalities in turn by training and surrounding circumstances : and this character shows itself in the size, colour, luminosity and definiteness of the causal body just as that of the personality shows itself in the mind-body, except that this higher vehicle is naturally subtler and more beautiful. In the case of a pupil who has made some progress on the Path of Holiness, the causal body is a sight wonderful and lovely beyond all earthly conception, while that of an Adept (or Master) is a magnificent sphere of living light, whose radiant glory no words can ever tell.

The colours in the body also are significant. The vibration denoting the power of unselfish affection shows itself as a pale rose-colour ; that indicating high intellectual power is yellow ; that expressing sympathy is green ; blue betokens devotional feeling, while a luminous lilac-blue typifies high spirituality.

Q. But a man in the course of his evolution acquires undesirable qualities also. Do they pass into this causal body, too ?

Ans. No. Such qualities as pride, sensuality, irritability, are also reducible to vibrations, but, being vibrations

of the lower subdivisions of their respective worlds, they cannot pass on to the causal body, as it is built of the matter of only the three higher subplanes of the mental. He can build nothing but good qualities into his ego. The evil qualities are but the play of the lower bodies when those bodies are not controlled by the ego. They are thus negative, and represent a lack of development in the causal body. As the ego gains in strength, the activities of body and mind that we call evil diminish, and they disappear entirely when the causal body is perfect and the man reaches the end of his earthly pilgrimage of births and deaths.

The difference between the causal body of a savage and that of an advanced man of saintly wisdom is that the first is an empty colourless bubble, extending a little beyond the physical body, while the second is a globe of brilliant light and dazzling radiance which may extend to a radius of a hundred yards or so.

Q. How can we help on the growth of our causal body?

Ans. There is not much to be done by direct action, but working at the improvement of the lower bodies and the building up of a pure and noble character will improve the causal body and cause it to grow. In it the man deals with abstractions and knows truth by intuition, not reasoning. It is therefore fed and developed by abstract thinking, such as the higher mathematics and deep scientific and philosophical imagination, by strenuous meditation, by the yoking of intellect to service, by unselfish love and self-sacrifice. This body attains enormous dimensions—about a mile in radius—in an Adept, while the Lord Buddha is said to have had a causal body extending to three miles all round.

Q. Now what is the mental body and what is its function?

Ans. The mental body is built of the matter of the lower mental world, that is, the four lower subplanes of the mental plane. It expresses the concrete thoughts of the man or answers by its vibrations to the changes of thought in him. It is the vehicle of the ego, who is the Thinker, for his reasoning work, for his manifestation as intellect, and varies greatly in different people. It is oval in outline, interpenetrating the physical and astral bodies, surrounding them with a radiant atmosphere as it develops.

The size and shape of this body depend on those of the causal body. The mind body literally grows in size with the advancing evolution of man. In an unevolved person it is so little developed that it is even difficult to distinguish it; but in a more advanced man, one who is not spiritual but who has only developed the faculties of his mind and trained his intellect, the mind body is seen as a definitely developed and organised vehicle of activity with a clear outline and full vigour.

The colours in this and the astral body have the same significance as in the causal body, but as we approach the physical matter, the hues are grosser by comparison, less delicate and less living, while we also find some additional colours in the lower bodies. We see the thought of pride as orange, irritability as brilliant scarlet, avarice as bright brown, selfishness as grey-brown and deceit as grey-green. Again, the good qualities of affection, devotion and intellect may be tinged by selfishness, and are then seen as impure and muddy owing to their distinctive colours being mingled with the brown of selfishness. There are in the higher vehicles additional colours of which we can form no idea in the physical world.

Q. How does the mind body grow ?

Ans. It grows by thought, by study, by the exercise of good emotions, aspirations and beneficent endeavours, and by regular, strenuous meditation. Our thoughts are the material we build into the mind body, and by the use of artistic powers and higher emotions we literally build the mind body day by day. If we do not exercise our mental faculties, but constantly accept thoughts from outside instead of forming them from within, our mind body cannot grow. When a man uses his mental body, it not only vibrates for the time more rapidly, but temporarily swells and increases in size. By a prolonged thought this increase becomes permanent, while the characteristics built by good and useful thoughts into the mental body are handed on to the permanent causal body to be carried over for future incarnations, enabling the man to obtain a more highly developed mind body in the next incarnation, with those qualities showing themselves as innate faculties. Good thoughts produce vibrations in the finer matter of the body, which by its specific gravity tends to float in the upper part of the ovoid ; whereas bad thoughts, such as selfishness and avarice, are oscillations of the grosser matter, which tends to gravitate towards the lower part of the ovoid. Consequently, the ordinary man who frequently yields himself to selfish thoughts of various kinds tends to expand the lower part of his mental body, which thus appears like an egg with its larger end downwards. On the other hand, the man who has devoted himself to higher thoughts and repressed the lower ones, expands the upper part of his mental body, and therefore presents the appearance of an egg standing on its smaller end. The subject of the power and use of thought will be dealt with in a separate chapter.

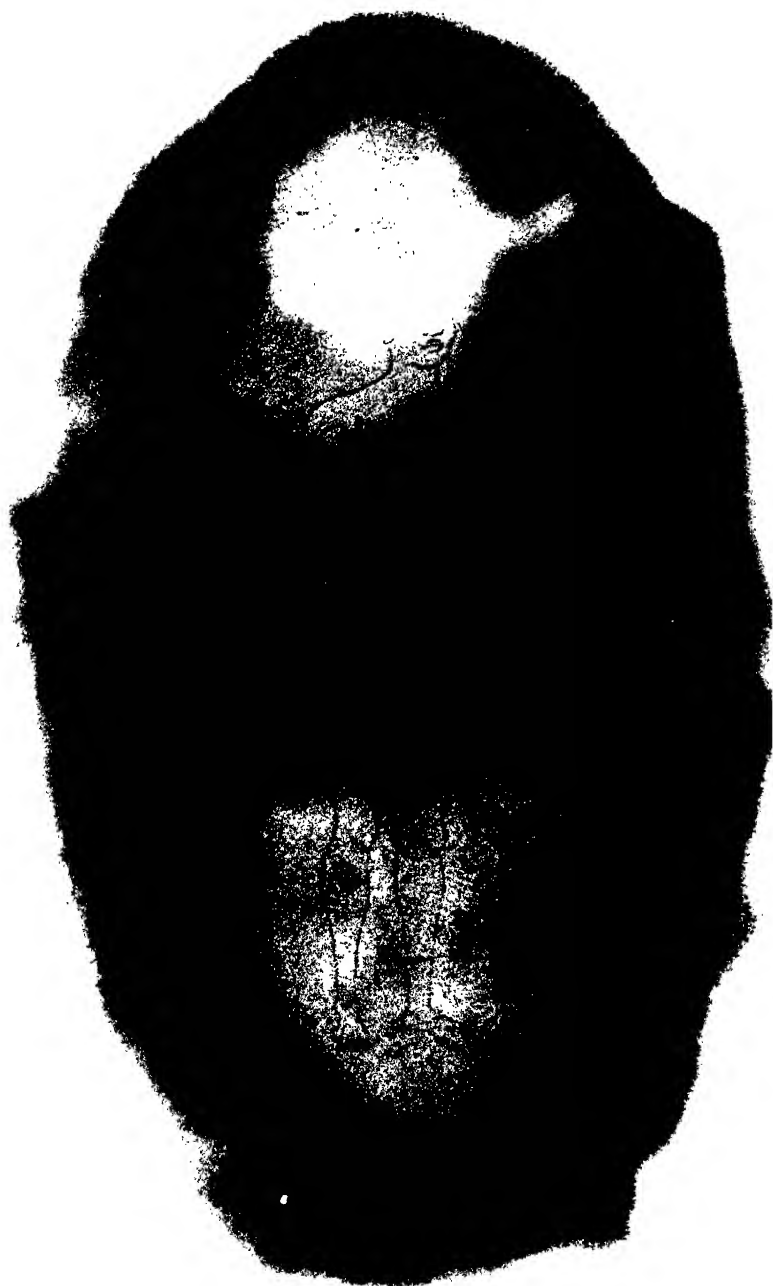
Q. Why have some persons a head for mathematics, while others are unable even to add correctly? Why do some persons understand and appreciate music, while others do not know one tune from another?

Ans. In the mental body there are certain striations which divide it into irregular segments, each corresponding to a certain department of the physical brain, so that each type of thought has to function through its duly assigned portion. The mental body of the ordinary man being not fully developed, a great many of the special departments in him are not yet in activity, and any attempt at thought belonging to those departments has to travel round through some inappropriate channel which happens to be fully open. The result is that his thought on these subjects is clumsy and uncomprehending.

From a study of the colours and striations in a man's mental body, the clairvoyant can perceive his character and the progress he has made in his present life. From similar features of the causal body he can see what progress the ego has made since its original formation during individualisation.

Q. What is the function of the astral body?

Ans. Built of the matter of the seven substates of the astral world, this is the body of man's Kāmic consciousness, the seat of all animal desires, the centre of the senses where all sensory impressions become sensations, the vehicle of passion and inferior emotion in man. In size and shape it is like the two higher bodies, the mental and the causal, just described. Every one is constantly working through the astral body, but few work in it separate from the physical. In an undeveloped person this body presents a very inchoate appearance with its outline undefined and its material dull, coarse and ill-arranged, resembling a



rolling cloud of unpleasant colours. When withdrawn from the physical body, as in sleep, it is a mere shapeless shifting cloud, unfit to act as an independent vehicle ; but in a man of intellectual culture and spiritual growth it shows the progress of the owner by the definiteness of its outline, the luminosity of its materials, and the perfection of its organisation.

The colours in the astral body bear the same meaning as those of the higher bodies, but are several octaves of colour below them ; while that body has also additional colours expressing less desirable feelings in man which cannot show themselves in the higher vehicles. For example, black shows malice and hatred ; deep heavy grey signifies depression, while a livid pale grey indicates fear. Sensuality is shown by the presence of a lurid brownish-red colour ; scarlet flecks in the astral body indicate irritability, while jealousy is seen as a peculiar brownish-green, its extreme activity being shown by bright scarlet flashes of anger which pierce it.

When the astral body is comparatively quiet (it is never actually at rest), the colours seen in it indicate those emotions to which the man is most in the habit of yielding himself. But when the man is experiencing any particular feeling, the rate of vibration which expresses the feeling dominates for a time the entire astral body. For example, if it be devotion, the whole of his astral body is flushed with blue, and so long as the emotion remains at its strongest, the normal colours appear faintly through a veil of it ; but when the vehemence of the sentiment dies away, the normal colours re-assert themselves. But because of this spasm of emotion that part of his astral body which is normally blue has been increased in size. Thus a man frequently feeling high devotion soon comes to have a

large area of blue permanently existing in his astral body.

Q. How can we improve the astral body so that it may cease to vibrate in answer to the lower impulses and begin to answer to the higher influences of the astral world ?

Ans. As the astral body lies between the physical and mental bodies, its improvement hinges on the one side on the purification of the physical body, and on the other on the purification and development of the mind. Being composed of the matter of the seven subplanes of the astral, the greater the proportion of finer astral matter it has in each subplane, the purer it becomes and the better is it fitted to act as a vehicle of consciousness and to travel long distances when separated from the physical body during sleep.

Astral matter is peculiarly susceptible to impressions from thought as it responds more readily than physical material to every impulse of thought, strong thought taking a covering of astral matter and persisting as an entity for a long time. So the astral body thrills in answer to every thought that strikes it, whether the thoughts come from within the mind of the owner, or from without, from the minds of other men, and changes its colour continuously as it vibrates under thought impacts. If thoughts are high and noble, they demand finer mental matter and consequently finer astral matter in the astral body to respond to them. The astral body thus has to lose grosser and denser particles from each subplane and gain finer and rarer kinds, and thus become pure. Again, the pure astral body attracts to itself pure thoughts like a magnet, and these in their turn react on it and make it purer.

The astral body is also affected by the purity or impurity of the physical body. If we unwisely build into

our body coarse physical particles of an impure kind by including in our diet animal flesh, alcoholic drinks or narcotic drugs and other foul and degrading articles, we attract to ourselves correspondingly impure types of astral matter. On the other hand, by feeding on clean food and drink we not only improve our physical vehicle, but also purify the astral body by taking from the astral world delicate and fine materials for its construction. With all the three bodies thus purified, new possibilities open up before the man, and knowledge gradually flows into him, a wider universe unfolding on every side.

Q. Is there any change in the astral body during sleep? What are its respective functions during the waking and sleeping states of man?

Ans. Studying a person when awake and when asleep we find a marked change in his astral body. When awake, astral activities—changing of colours, etc.—manifest themselves in and around the physical body; but when he is asleep, the astral body slips out and floats with the real man inside it in the air, above the physical body lying in the bed. In a person of undeveloped type the separated astral body is a shapeless mass with an irregular outline resembling a rolling cloud of unpleasant colours. It cannot go far from the physical body and is useless as a vehicle of consciousness. The man within it is in a dreaming condition, almost as much asleep in his astral body as in his physical. If anything should occur to drive it from its physical partner, the latter will awaken and the astral will quickly re-enter it. The astral body of an average man in sleep assumes the likeness of the physical. Such a man, however, cannot work consciously on the astral plane. In his astral body he drifts toward persons to whom he is attracted, but his attention is turned

inwards, and he communes with his friends mentally only. At a stage a little higher, his mind is very active and receptive, and can work out problems presented to it more easily than in the physical body, when, it is said, "sleep brings counsel". But a pure and self-controlled man who shows an earnest desire for service to his fellow-men in the physical world and who has his astral body fully evolved and properly organised by moral and mental activities, is often "awakened" in the astral world by a more advanced person—usually a pupil of a Master—who induces him to turn his attention outwards, to wake up to his astral surroundings and attend to what is going on around him instead of merely remaining immersed in thought. In the case of such a developed person who is trained and is accustomed to function in the astral world, the man himself in his astral body is in full consciousness when that body slips out of his physical during sleep. His astral body is clearly outlined and definitely organised, bears the likeness of the man and can be fully utilised as a vehicle in which he can work more actively and more conveniently than in his physical body, and can travel any distance with great freedom and rapidity without disturbing the physical body. Of course, as is most often the case, if the man has not learned to link his physical and astral bodies, there will be a break in his consciousness and he will not be able to remember the things done during his sleep.

Q. We know everything at least about the physical vehicle through Western science. Has Theosophy anything to add to our knowledge?

Ans. The physical plane having seven subplanes as explained before in Chapter II, the physical vehicle is composed of the matter of all those states. The ordinarily

visible physical body, Sthula Sharira, has matter of the three lower sub-planes, *i.e.*, solid, liquid and gaseous, while the matter of the four ethers composes what is called the etheric double or Chhâyā Sharira (shadow body). Both these function together on the physical plane for one physical life, and are cast aside by the man at death.

The body exists for us, not we for the body. It is an instrument to be refined and improved, and also trained and made of such constituents as may fit it to be a vehicle on the physical plane for the highest purposes. One of its peculiarities is that once it gets accustomed to working along particular lines, it will continue to follow those lines of its own accord. If a bad habit be required to be changed, the body will first offer considerable resistance, but if it be compelled to alter it and be forced to act as the man desires, then after a time it will, of its own accord, repeat the new habit imposed on it and contentedly pursue the new method as it pursued the old one. The reason of this is the unconscious memory of the cells in the physical body, as explained in Chapter I in connection with vegetarianism.

The human organism is made up of innumerable living bodies called "cells," each of which has a conscious life of its own, and all combine to make the body a single whole.

Q. How can you say that each cell has a life or consciousness of its own?

Ans. There are several kinds of consciousness in the body; one is the "I" consciousness which manifests through the body as an organism; another is the purely physical consciousness which may be the physical elemental, mentioned before, and which is the aggregate of the consciousness

of the individual cells. The selective action of the cells in taking from the blood what they want and rejecting what is not wanted is an instance of this self-consciousness of the cells, and so is also what is called by physiologists the "unconscious memory of the cells". Science tells us that our physical body is made up of innumerable tiny "lives" or cells, and that these are continually changing, some passing out from us to the world around, and others being taken in, in their place, to form part of our body, so much so that no man has, at any moment, in his physical body one particle of the matter of which it consisted seven years before. According to Occult Science not only are our own bodies, but also the bodies of animals, plants and even minerals, built of such living particles (including bacteria, microbes, etc.), some of which are so tiny that they can only be seen under a powerful microscope. Each particle, whether organic or inorganic, is a life, and these build up the material and its cells. The recent experiments of Dr. J. C. Bose conclusively prove that both the mineral and the plant partake of the same life as the animal and the man.

Q. Then is there life also in a piece of stone?

Ans. Certainly. But though each particle is a life, the ordinary man calls a body living when the movement of its particles is so rapid as to be visible to him through his senses. When this movement is not so visible, he calls the body dead. But the fact that the movement in the stone is too subtle to be visible to the gross physical senses, is no reason why the stone should be called inanimate.

Q. Then who dies at the time of the death of the man? Is it the "I" manifesting through the body or is it the particles which make up the cells of the body that die?

Ans. Nothing really dies. A cell is an aggregate of lives as each particle which goes to the making up of the cell is a life ; and even when the cell is broken up, these lives cannot be destroyed but go to the making up of other forms. Similar is the case with the whole body which is made up of innumerable cells, each with a life of its own ; the combined life of all the cells making up the life or body-consciousness of the whole physical vehicle, which may be the physical elemental, spoken of before. All that takes place at death is that the " I " consciousness which was manifesting through the body during the man's life on the physical plane merely slips out of that body ; it cannot die, as the real man is immortal. The death of the physical body occurs when, with the withdrawal of the life-energy, the many lives (microbes), kept under control in the form of the body by that life-energy, go their own separate ways, as the soldiers of an army disbanded by a General go their respective ways, and what we call decay sets in. The body is equally alive in both the cases that we call living and dead. When considered as living, it has a particular organised form controlled by the life-energy or Prāna ; when called dead, it is equally alive in the form of separate microbes, though owing to the withdrawal of the life-energy its outward form no longer persists. Our ordinary test of a living or dead thing is movement, and if the body were really dead, there should be no movement of putrefaction or the growth of hair on the body after the man had finally left that vehicle.

Q. Now what is the etheric double ?

Ans. The etheric double is so called as it is composed of the matter of the four ethers, *i.e.*, the four finer sub-planes of the physical, and is an exact double or counterpart of the physical gross body, particle by particle, its

shadow as it were. Because of this it is sometimes called Chhāyā Sharira (shadow body). It is also sometimes spoken of as the wraith, the fluidic body or simply the double. It is faintly luminous and violet-grey in colour, interpenetrating the physical body and extending about one-fourth of an inch beyond its periphery. Its four ethers may mingle in finer or coarser combinations like the constituents of its denser counterpart; but the dense body and its double vary together in quality, so that if a man refines and purifies his physical body by pure food and drink, the etheric double becomes purified without any further effort.

This invisible part of the physical body is the vehicle through which flow the streams of Prāna or vitality which keep the body alive, and without it, as a bridge to convey undulations of thought and feeling from the astral to the visible denser physical matter, the ego could make no use of the cells of the brain.

On the shape and build of the etheric double depend the shape and build of the physical body, so it is the mould of the latter body. All alterations in the physical body from youth to old age first occur in the etheric double before they pass on to the physical body, and if an etheric double be defective and of a certain shape with fine or coarse ethers for its constituents, the physical body will be built on that etheric mould, with similar defects and shape and composed of similarly fine, or coarse, dense particles.

The observations of the N-rays, made by M. Jean Becquerel in the course of his study and communicated by him to the Paris Academy of Sciences early in the present century, show that animals under chloroform cease to emit N-rays, that these rays are never emitted by a

corpse, that flowers and metals alike which normally give out these rays cease to emanate them under the action of chloroform. These N-rays are due to the vibrations in the etheric double, causing waves in the surrounding ether. Chloroform expels the etheric double, and hence the waves cease. At death the etheric double leaves the body, and the rays consequently can no longer be observed.

Q. Why does one man obtain a beautiful etheric double, and another a defective one?

Ans. Man evolves by reincarnation under the law of Karma as will be explained later on, and so receives different kinds of etheric doubles for different lives. He has for each life an etheric double just suited for the purpose of reaping in that life as he has sown in past lives. It enables him to acquire experience which is the necessary outcome of his good or bad actions, and a physical body being formed on that etheric mould, the man has to reap therein as he has sown. These two bodies ordinarily stay together.

Q. If the physical body and its etheric double have to stay together, are they dependent on each other for their existence?

Ans. Being a mould for the physical body, the etheric double comes into existence before its grosser counterpart, and follows its own line of quiet disintegration after the man leaves his physical body at death. It is separable from its physical counterpart although unable to go far from it. In normally healthy persons the separation is difficult and even unwholesome, though the double is torn out from its dense counterpart by anæsthetics, and in diseased or defective bodies and in persons called materialising mediums, it slips out without great effort and is seen by clairvoyants as an exact replica of the physical, united

to it by a slender magnetic thread. It possesses vortices through which forces pour, and is the medium of the life-forces and their transmitter to its dense comrade. Apart from that comrade it is helpless and unconscious, a drifting cloud with force-centres, useless when there is nothing to which it can transmit the forces playing through it, and subject to manipulation from outside entities who can use it as a matrix for materialisation.

Q. What becomes of the etheric double at the time of death ?

Ans. Death means for the etheric double just what it means for the physical body—the breaking up of its constituent parts. It is the vehicle of vitality or Prāna which animates the whole physical body. At the hour of death it oozes forth from the body, when it is seen by the clairvoyant as a violet light, or violet form, hovering over the dying man, still attached to the physical body by the slender thread already mentioned. Consciousness in the body then grows less and less vivid till at the death of the physical body the thread snaps, thereby breaking the last magnetic link between the dense body and the remaining principles of the human constitution. Being of physical matter the etheric double remains in the neighbourhood of the corpse and disintegrates slowly, its remnants being sometimes seen in graveyards as violet lights hovering over graves. It is better for several reasons to burn the dead than bury them, as will be explained in Chapter VI.

Q. You spoke of the etheric double as the vehicle of Prāna or vitality. What is that Prāna ?

Ans. In order that the physical body may live, it requires food for its digestion, air for its breathing, and vitality for its absorption. Vitality is essentially a force, but when clothed in matter it appears as an element existing

in all the planes of nature. Vitality is a force coming originally from the sun, and everything and everyone is immersed in an ocean of that life, called Jiva or the solar life-principle, like fish in an ocean of water. Everyone appropriates this life, thence called Prāna, the human life-principle or vital force; it is colourless, though intensely luminous and active, as it comes from the sun, and is not directly useful to the body for assimilation till absorbed through the etheric part of the spleen and specialised and transmuted into rose-coloured particles. The earth's atmosphere is full of this force at all times, though specially active in brilliant sunlight. As blood circulates through arteries and veins, so does vitality flow along the nerves in tiny globules of lovely rosy light, the brain being the centre of his nervous circulation, and any irregularity in the absorption or flow of vitality at once affects the etheric double precisely as any abnormality in the flow of blood affects the physical body. When that vital force no longer flows along the nerves as in a limb benumbed by cold, or is withdrawn by a mesmerist by magnetic passes, there is no sensation in the limb, and what is called local anæsthesia is produced.

When the rosy nerve-ether—the rose-coloured particles—has been absorbed, the superfluous Prāna finally radiates from the body in every direction as bluish-white light. In a healthy man the spleen does its work so generously that more vital force than is necessary is constantly radiating from the body in all directions. A man in perfect health, therefore, can impart some of it to another intentionally by mesmeric passes or otherwise, though unconsciously he radiates strength and vitality all around him. On the other hand when a man is unable through weakness or other causes to specialise a sufficient amount

of this force for his own use, he unconsciously acts as a sponge and appropriates to himself the already specialised vitality of a sensitive person who is unfortunate enough to come near him and who feels an unaccountable weariness and langour afterwards.

There lies the danger of healthy children sleeping by the side of weak and old persons, and the lassitude felt by persons attending spiritualistic séances without precautions against the drain upon their vital force during manifestations is similarly explained.

When that specialised Prāna circulates in the body more rapidly than necessary, the man becomes excitable and hysteric. On the other hand when that vital force is not specialised in sufficient quantity or circulates very slowly in the body, the man feels langour and *lassitude*.

Prāna cannot be separated from the physical vehicle and its etheric double during life, and the three always stay together in the waking or sleeping state of man. When Prāna ceases to circulate in any part of the body, that part dies with a local death in the body, (blindness, deafness, etc., are often thus produced,) and similarly, when it separates from the whole body, there is general death. This Prāna should not be confounded with what is commonly called physical vitality measured by chemical actions in the body. These are the effects of Prāna which is itself more analogous to electrical conditions and is the cause of chemical and other effects.

Q. Is a man the same while asleep and while awake, or is there any change during sleep?

Ans. While the man is alive and awake in the physical world, he is limited by his physical body, for he uses the astral and mental bodies only as bridges to connect himself

with the physical. But that last named body soon becomes fatigued, and needs periodical rest ; so the man leaving that body with its etheric double and Prāna every night withdraws into the astral body which, so far as we know, does not get fatigued and needs no rest.

The man thus liberated from his physical body in sleep can move about in the astral world in his astral body. The primitive savage does not go far from his sleeping body and has practically no consciousness during sleep, as explained before. All the cultured people belonging to the more advanced races of the world have at the present time their astral senses very fairly developed, so that if they were sufficiently aroused to examine the realities which surround them during sleep, they would be able to observe them and learn much from them. But in the vast majority of cases they are not so aroused, or "awakened," as stated before, and they spend most of their nights in a kind of brown study, pondering deeply over whatever thought may have been uppermost in their minds when they fell asleep. They have the astral faculties, but they scarcely use them ; they are certainly awake *on* the astral plane, and yet they are not in the least awake *to* the plane, and are consequently conscious of their surroundings only very vaguely, if at all. But an advanced man can travel in his astral body wherever he likes and has full consciousness in the astral world, although he is generally unable to impress on his waking memory the events of his astral life during sleep. Sometimes when he does remember any incident, he calls it a vivid dream, though more often his recollections are hopelessly entangled with events of his waking life and impressions on the etheric brain. But with advancing evolution a time will come for every man when he will remember every incident of his astral life and will

have a continuous memory. (See "Dreams" in this chapter.)

Q. If a man leaves his physical body during sleep every night as well as at death, does he die every night and come to life again every morn ?

Ans. No. The physical body by itself would soon disintegrate and could not be used as a vehicle unless there were with it the co-ordinating force of Prāna acting through the etheric double. The physical body and its double can be compared to a coat and its lining. One must put them on and off together, but once they are separated or torn apart, they cannot be put on again. Therefore when during sleep a man goes to the astral world, he leaves his physical body together with the etheric double and Prāna as a vehicle on the bed, and the real man comes out in the astral body taking with him his other bodies. But at the time of death only the physical body is separated, and the whole man comes out of it in the etheric double, and then leaving that etheric double also after some time slips out of it in his astral body. Thus during sleep the real man with four principles temporarily leaves the physical vehicle made up of the three lower principles, *i.e.*, the physical body, etheric double and Prāna, while at death only one principle, the physical body, is permanently separated from the rest of the man, *i.e.*, from the other six principles.

Q. You have fully explained the constitution of man, but you spoke of the seven principles of man. What are they ?

Ans. Speaking in another way, man is called a sevenfold being, and has a septenary constitution, or is composed of seven principles.

NAMES OF PRINCIPLES

Higher Triad	{	1. Ātmā or Spirit.
		2. Buddhi or Intuition, or Vehicle of Ātmā.
		3. Manas or Thinker or Intelligence.
Lower Quaternary	{	4. Kāma or Passional and emotional nature.
		5. Prāna or Vitality or Life-energy.
		6. Etheric double, or Vehicle of Prāna.
		7. Physical body.

These principles are, it will be observed, divided into two groups, one containing the three higher principles and called the Higher Triad, the deathless part of man's nature, the spirit and soul of the Christian terminology; and the other containing the four lower and therefore called the quaternary, the mortal or transitory part, the 'body' of Christianity.

Q. Please explain them a little in detail. The three lowest have already been explained, but what is Kāma?

Ans. Kāma literally means desire, and is the passional and emotional nature including all animal needs as hunger, thirst, sexual desire, etc., and also passions as love (in its lower sense), hatred, envy, jealousy, etc. It is the desire for experience of material joys, is the activity of consciousness corresponding to the astral body, is the grossest of all our principles and binds us fast to earthly life. It functions in Kāma rupa (desire body) or the astral body which has been described before.

Q. What, now, is Manas ?

Ans. Manas, from the Sanskrit *man*, to think, means Thinker, (spoken of vaguely in the West as Mind,) and has in it the matter of the mental plane. It is the tenant in the house made up of the quaternary. We have already spoken of it as the Intelligence in man. It is the activity of consciousness corresponding to the mental and causal bodies.

In each incarnation, the Manas is dual. It projects a part of its substance, the projection being called the lower Manas; and united to Kāma as Kāma-Manas, it becomes the normal human brain intelligence, the personal self of man. The quaternary as a whole is the personality spoken of before, and the higher Manas gives the individualising touch that makes the personality recognise itself as "I," though the lower Manas makes the thought "I am this," confusing the self with its personal vehicles.

The heaven-aspiring mind, the higher Manas, with Buddhi and Ātmā is called the ego, as explained before. The lower Manas is engulfed in the quaternary, clasping Kāma with one hand and retaining with the other its hold on its father, the higher Manas. The life problem of each incarnation is whether the lower Manas shall be dragged down by Kāma and torn off from the higher Triad to which it belongs by nature, or whether it will successfully rejoin its 'Father in Heaven,'—the higher Manas in the Triad—and carry with itself the experiences of its last life. It must be understood, of course, that these possibilities represent two extremes, and that in the case of the average man the lower Manas will partially aspire upwards and partially tend downwards.

Q. What are the two higher principles, Ātmā and Buddhi ?

Ans. Ātmā, spoken of before as the spirit in man, is the most abstract part of man's nature, the one reality which manifests on all planes, the essence of which all our principles are aspects. The One Eternal Existence rays forth as Ātmā, the very self alike of the universe and of man. It clothes itself in Buddhi, spoken of before as the Intuition in man. The latter has in it matter of the Buddhic plane and is the principle of spiritual discernment. Ātmā-Buddhi is a universal principle, but requires individualising to gather experience and attain self-consciousness, and so the mind principle is united to these two higher principles to form the ego. The four lower principles are common both to animal and man.

Q. If the four lower principles are found both in animal and man, why do we see so great a difference between them?

Ans. Though Kāma is manifest more or less even in animals, the difference between animal and man is due to the presence of the fifth principle, Manas, in man. Kāma-Manas is the human soul, while Kāma is the animal soul. So long as man is animated by Kāma, by desires and by passions alone, he is on a level with the animals, because Kāma has no higher consciousness; and so long as Kāma is predominant, Manas cannot work, and the man acts like an animal. That is also the reason why a man in a violent passion is insensible to reason or advice. Through these principles the man comes into contact with different planes of nature.

Q. How does he come into contact with those planes by means of his different principles?

Ans. Man comes into contact with things on the physical plane by means of his physical body or is conscious of their existence with the aid of one or more of his

five physical senses ; similarly he comes into contact with higher planes by means of his other principles, and thus becomes conscious of their existence. Different planes do not occupy different places or different divisions of space, but interpenetrate one another. The same being the case with the different principles of man, to go from one plane to another is not like going from London to New York, but is merely to transfer consciousness from one to the other plane. For example, in the waking state, we are conscious of the pain of wounds in our physical body ; but when we are fighting with others in great excitement, we are not conscious of the physical pain of those wounds, as our consciousness is temporarily acting on the astral plane, though as soon as we cool down, we again become conscious of the pain. Similarly, a philosopher in deep thought forgets hunger and thirst, bodily comfort and disease, family and physical belongings, as well as anger and avarice, hate and love, and similar emotions and passions, because he is for the time working on the mental plane. An ordinary man thus comes into contact with different planes in his waking life, though he goes to the astral plane temporarily every night during sleep. After death he spends a time first in the astral condition and afterwards in the mental, the latter being a specially guarded part of the mental world which is called Devachan. For each of these worlds he has a body or vehicle, as explained before.

Q. The Seven Principles of Man have been explained, but how many bodies has he ?

Ans. He has three immortal and three mortal bodies :

The Ātmic, the Buddhic and the Causal bodies are immortal, while the mental, the astral and the physical are mortal.

The Ātmic body is but an atom of its own lofty world, the finest film of matter, an embodiment of Spirit. Into this body will pass the result of all experiences, the two lower bodies gradually merging themselves into it.

The Buddhic or the Bliss body, sometimes called the Christ body by the Christians, is of the Buddhic world. It is fed by lofty and loving aspirations, by compassion and all-embracing tenderness. It has hardly begun to be formed in the majority of mankind. Its special characteristic is that when it is formed and the consciousness of a man begins to be active in it, he loses the sense of separateness from all other individuals and understands the unity underlying all manifestation.

The third immortal body, the Causal body, as well as the three mortal bodies, the mental, the astral and the physical have already been described in detail.

The man casts off his physical body at death, and the astral when he enters the heaven-world in his mental body. That mental body also disintegrates when he has finished his heaven-life and is clad only in his three immortal bodies which are subject neither to birth nor death. On descending for rebirth he takes on a new mental body as well as a new astral one, conformable to his character, and these attach themselves to his physical body, and the man then enters by birth a new period of mortal life.

Q. What, now, are dreams, and how are they caused ?

Ans. This question, so frequently asked, requires detailed study, but only a cursory explanation of the phenomena can be given here. The various branches of the subject may be arranged thus: first, to consider the mechanism, physical, etheric and astral, by means of which impressions are conveyed to our consciousness; secondly, to see how the consciousness in its turn affects and uses

this mechanism ; thirdly, to note the condition both of the consciousness and its mechanism during sleep ; and fourthly, to enquire how the various kinds of dreams are thereby produced.

I. THE MECHANISM

(a) *Physical*

There is in the body a great central axis of nervous matter, ending in the brain, and from this a network of nerve-threads radiates in every direction through the body. It is these nerve-threads, according to modern scientific theory, which by their vibrations convey all impressions from without to the brain, and the latter upon receipt of these impressions translates them into sensations or perceptions ; so that if a man puts his hand upon some object and finds it hot, it is really not his hand that feels, but his brain, which is acting upon information transmitted to it by the vibrations, running along its telegraph wires, the nerve-threads.

All the nerve-threads of the body—those of the hand or foot or the bundle of them called the optic or auditory or olfactory nerves—are the same in constitution, though some of them have, through long ages of evolution, been specialised to receive and transmit to the brain most readily one particular set of rapid vibrations.

The brain, which is the great centre of the nervous system, is very readily affected by slight variations in the general health of a man, and most especially by any which involve a change in the circulation of the blood through it. If too much blood is supplied to the brain, congestion of the vessels takes place ; if too little, the brain (and

therefore the nervous system) becomes first irritable and then lethargic. The blood as it courses through the body has two principal functions to perform—to supply oxygen and to provide nutrition to the different organs of the body. If the supply of oxygen to the brain be deficient, it becomes overcharged with carbon dioxide, and heaviness and lethargy very shortly supervene, as in a crowded and ill-ventilated room. Again, if the speed with which the blood flows through the vessels be too great, it produces fever ; if too slow, then again lethargy is caused.

It is obvious, therefore, that the brain, through which all physical impressions must pass, may be easily disturbed in the due performance of its functions by causes apparently trivial, to which a man would pay no attention even during waking hours and of which he would be entirely ignorant during sleep.

One peculiarity of this physical mechanism is its remarkable tendency to repeat automatically vibrations to which it is accustomed to respond. It is this property of the brain which is responsible for all bodily habits and tricks of manner which are entirely independent of the will, and are often so difficult to conquer ; and it plays an even more important part during sleep than it does during waking hours.

(b) *Etheric*

As the transmission of impressions to the brain depends rather upon the regular flow of Prāna along the etheric portion of the nerve-threads than upon the mere vibration of the particles of their denser and visible portion, as is commonly supposed, it is obvious that any change in the volume or velocity of these life-currents will affect

the condition of the etheric portion of the brain and bring about hysteria, langour, lassitude, etc., as stated before. As the denser and etheric matters of the brain are both parts of one and the same physical organism, any irregularity in either will so dull or disturb the receptivity of the brain as to produce blurred or distorted images of whatever is presented to it.

(c) *Astral*

The astral vehicle is even more sensitive to external impressions than the gross and etheric bodies, for it is itself the seat of all desires and emotions—the connecting link through which alone the ego can collect experiences from physical life. It is peculiarly susceptible to the influence of passing thought-currents, as explained in Chapter VII, and when the mind is not actively controlling it, it is perpetually receiving these stimuli from without, and eagerly responding to them. This mechanism also, like the others, is more readily influenced during the sleep of the physical body.

2. THE EGO

All these different portions of the mechanism are in reality merely instruments of the ego. The ego is himself a developing entity, and in the case of most men he is scarcely more than a germ of what he is to be one day, as explained for the *causal body* already and for *The Evolution of Life* in Chapter VIII. Therefore the grasp which this reincarnating ego has of his various instruments and, consequently, his influence over them, are naturally small in his earlier stages. Neither his mind

nor his passions are thoroughly under his control. Consequently in sleep the different parts of the mechanism are very apt to act almost entirely on their own account without reference to him, and the stage of his spiritual advancement is one of the factors to be taken into account in considering the question of dreams.

Again, what the vibrations of the nerve-threads present to the brain are mere impressions, and it is the work of the ego, acting through the mind, to classify, combine and rearrange them for the formation of our conceptions of external objects. For example, when a person looks out of the window, and sees a house and a tree, and instantly recognises them for what they are, the information really conveyed through his eyes and the nerve-threads to the brain is that in a particular direction there are certain varied patches of colour bounded by more or less definite outlines. It is the mind which from its past experience is able to decide that one particular small white object is a house and another rounded green one is a tree, and that they are both probably of such and such a size, and at such and such a distance from him. Thus mere vision is by no means sufficient for accurate perception, and the discrimination of the ego acting through the mind has to be brought to bear upon what is seen; furthermore, this discrimination is not an inherent instinct of the mind, perfect from the first, but is the result of the unconscious comparison of a number of experiences.

3. CONDITION OF SLEEP

In deep sleep, the physical body of a man with its etheric double and Prāna lies quietly on the bed,

while the ego, in the astral body, floats with equal tranquility just above it.

(a) *The Brain*

When the ego has for the time resigned the control of his brain, that brain does not therefore become entirely unconscious, as the physical body has a certain dim consciousness of its own—probably the physical elemental, spoken of before—quite apart from that of the real self, and apart also from the *mere aggregate* of the consciousness of its individual cells. The grasp of this consciousness working in the physical brain is far feeblér than that of the man himself, and consequently, all the causes (quantity, quality and circulation of blood) which were mentioned before as likely to affect the action of the brain, are now capable of influencing it to a much greater extent. This is why indigestion, as affecting the flow of the blood, so frequently causes troubled sleep or bad dreams.

But even when undisturbed, this strange, dim consciousness has many remarkable peculiarities. Its action seems to be to a great extent automatic, and the results are usually incoherent, senseless and hopelessly confused.

It seems unable to apprehend an idea except in the form of a scene in which it itself is an actor, and therefore all stimuli, whether from within or without, are forthwith translated into perceptual images. It is incapable of grasping abstract ideas or memories as such; they immediately become imaginary percepts. For example, the idea of glory, suggested to that consciousness, could take shape only as a vision of some glorious being appearing before the dreamer.

Again, every local direction of thought becomes to it an absolute spacial transportation, so that, in absence of *the discriminating ego to balance the cruder impressions, any passing thought suggesting Delhi and Bombay could image itself only as an actual instantaneous transportation to those places, and the dreamer would suddenly find himself there, never seeming at the time to feel any surprise at startling transitions of this sort.*

Another source of the extraordinary confusion visible in this self-consciousness is the manner in which the law of association of ideas works in it. Every such association, whether abstract or concrete, becomes a mere combination of images; and as our association of ideas is often merely by synchronism, as of events which, though really entirely unconnected, happen to us in succession, it may be readily imagined that the most inextricable confusion of these images is of frequent occurrence.

Another peculiarity of this curious consciousness of the brain is that while singularly sensitive to the slightest external influences, such as sounds or touches, it yet magnifies and distorts them to an almost incredible degree. For example, the prick of a pin is magnified into a fatal stab received in a duel, while a slight pinch is translated into the bite of a wild beast.

(b) *The Etheric Brain*

This part of the organism, so sensitive to every influence even during waking life, is still more susceptible when in the condition of sleep. Clairvoyantly examined under these conditions, streams of thought are seen to be constantly sweeping through it—not its own thoughts, for it has no power to think—but the casual thoughts of others

which are always floating around us, as mentioned in Chapter VII; and in sleep, it is more than usually at the mercy of these thought-currents, since the ego is for the time in less close association with it. Again, it is noticed that when by any means these currents are shut out from the etheric brain, it does not remain absolutely passive, but begins very slowly and dreamily to evolve pictures for itself from its store of past memories.

(c) *The Astral Body*

As mentioned before, the appearance of this vehicle in which the ego is functioning during sleep, differs very greatly according to the stage of development of the ego. But in every case, this body is, as ever, intensely impressionable by any thought or suggestion involving desire.

(d) *The Ego in Sleep*

Much as the condition of the astral body during sleep changes as evolution goes on, that of the ego inhabiting it changes still more. Where the former is in the stage of the floating wreath of mist, the ego is practically almost as much asleep as the body lying below him and is blind to the sights and deaf to the voices of his own higher plane. If a man in this primitive condition remembers anything at all of what happens to him during sleep, it will almost invariably be the result of purely physical impressions made upon the brain either from within or from without—any experience which his real ego may have had being forgotten. Sleepers may be observed at all stages from this condition of blank oblivion, up to full and perfect

consciousness on the astral plane, though the latter is naturally comparatively rare. Even a man who is sufficiently awake to meet with important experience in this higher life, may yet be unable so far to dominate his brain as to check its current of inconsequent thought pictures and impress upon it what he wishes it to recollect, and may thus have on awakening a most confused memory or no memory at all of what has really happened to him.

But whether he remembers anything when physically awake or not, the ego who is fully or even partially conscious of his surroundings on the astral plane, is beginning to enter into his heritage of powers transcending any that he possesses down here; for his consciousness when thus liberated from the physical body has very remarkable possibilities.

He has a transcendental measure of time and space, *i.e.*, his measure of time and space is so entirely different from what we have in waking life that from our point of view it seems as though neither time nor space existed for him. An illustration may be given of the story of a man who was awakened by the firing of a shot, which yet came in as the *conclusion* of a long dream, in which he had become a soldier, had deserted and suffered terrible hardships, had been captured, tried, condemned and finally shot—the whole long drama being lived through in the moment of being awakened by the sound of the shot.

Another remarkable peculiarity of the ego is his faculty or habit of instantaneous dramatisation. In the cases of the shot and the pinch mentioned above, the physical effect which awakened the person came as the climax to a dream apparently extending over a considerable space of time, though obviously suggested in reality by that physical effect itself. Now the news of this physical

effect, whether of sound or of touch, has to be conveyed to the brain by the nerve-threads, and this transmission takes a certain space of time, only a minute fraction of a second. But the ego, when out of the body, is able to perceive with absolute instantaneity without the use of the nerves, and is consequently aware of what happens just that minute fraction of a second before the information reaches his physical brain, and in that barely appreciable space of time he appears to compose a kind of drama or series of scenes, leading up to and culminating in the event which awakens the physical body.

Another result which follows from the ego's super-normal method of time-measurement is that in some degree prevision is possible to him ; he foresees at times events that will be of interest or importance to his lower personality, and makes more or less successful endeavours to impress them upon it.

Again, the ego when out of the body during sleep appears to think in symbols, so that what down here would be an idea requiring many words to express it, is perfectly conveyed to him by a single symbolical image. Such a thought or symbol, when remembered in the waking consciousness of course needs translation. Often the mind duly performs this function, but sometimes the symbol is recollected without its key, and then confusion arises. Most dreamers agree that to dream of deep water signifies approaching trouble, and that pearls are a sign of tears.

4. DREAMS

It is thus seen that the factors in the production of dreams may be :

1. The ego, in any state of consciousness from utter insensibility to perfect command of his faculties, and with possession, in the latter condition, of certain powers far transcending those that he possesses in his ordinary waking state.

2. The astral body, ever palpitating with the wild surgings of emotion and desire.

3. The etheric brain, with a ceaseless procession of disconnected pictures sweeping through it.

4. The physical brain, with its infantile semi-consciousness and its habit of expressing every stimulus in pictorial form.

Of course, real dreams are actual experiences, which have occurred to the ego on the astral or higher planes, when wandering away from his sleeping physical body.

(a) The True Vision

This is a case where the ego either sees for himself some fact upon a higher plane of nature, or else has it impressed upon him by a more advanced entity. He is made aware of some fact which it is important for him to know, or perhaps sees some glorious vision which encourages and strengthens him.

(b) The Prophetic Dream

This, too, must be attributed exclusively to the action of the ego, who either foresees for himself or is told of some future event for which he wishes to prepare his lower consciousness. Sometimes the event is one of serious moment, such as death or disaster, while often the prophecy is evidently intended as a warning.

(c) The Symbolical Dream

This also is the work of the ego and might be called a less successful variant of the preceding class, for it is after all an imperfectly translated effort on his part to convey information as to the future.

(d) The Vivid and Connected Dream

This is sometimes a remembrance of a real astral experience which has occurred to the ego while wandering away from his sleeping physical body ; more frequently it is the dramatisation by that ego, either of the impression produced by some trifling physical sound or touch, or of some casual idea which happens to touch him.

(e) The Confused Dream

This, the commonest of all, may be caused in various ways. It may simply be a more or less perfect, recollection of a series of the disconnected pictures and impossible transformations produced by the senseless automatic action of the physical brain : it may be a reproduction of the stream of casual thought which has been pouring through the etheric brain : if sensual images of any kind enter into it, it is due to the ever restless tide of earthly desire, probably stimulated by some unholy influence of the astral world : it may be due to an imperfect attempt at dramatisation on the part of an undeveloped ego : or it may be, and most often is, due to an inextricable mingling of several or all of these influences.

Q. You have explained how dreams are caused, but can you give some practical suggestions as to how to remember them ?

Ans. Some people, in whom the ego is undeveloped and earthly desires of various kinds are strong, never dream at all; many others are now and then, under a collocation of favourable circumstances, able to bring back a confused memory of nocturnal adventure. But if a man wishes to reap in his waking consciousness the benefit of what his ego may learn during sleep, it is absolutely necessary for him to acquire control over his thoughts, subdue all lower passions, and attune his mind to higher things.

When a man leaves his body at night, he remembers all that he did the night before and during the day—in fact, he has the whole of his present waking memory, *plus* that of his nightly astral life. The astral memory includes the physical, but his physical brain does not remember the astral experience, for the simple reason that it had no share in it.

A special link must be made, or rather an obstacle must be removed, in order to bring the memory through into the physical brain. In the slow course of evolution the power of perfect memory will come to every one, so that there will no longer be any veil between the two planes.

If a man enters the state of sleep with his thought fixed upon high and holy things, he thereby draws round him the elementals (see Chapter VII) created by like thoughts in others; his rest is peaceful, his mind open to impressions from above and closed to those from below, for he has set it working in the right direction. If, on the contrary, he falls asleep with impure and earthly thoughts floating through his brain, he attracts to himself all the gross and evil creatures who come near him, while his sleep is troubled by the wild surgings of passions and

desires which render him blind to the sights, and deaf to the sounds, which come from higher planes. Thus through what seem at first but the portals of dream, entrance may perchance presently be gained into those grander realms where alone true vision is possible.

Sometimes a man may wake in the morning with a strong feeling of elation and success, without in the least being able to recall in what he has succeeded. This generally means some good piece of work well done, but it is often impossible for the man to recover the details. At other times he may bring back with him a feeling of reverence, and this means that he has seen a vision and has been in the presence of some one much greater than himself. Sometimes, on the other hand, a person may wake with a feeling of terrible fear. That is sometimes due only to the alarm of the physical body at some unaccustomed sensation; but it is sometimes also due to having encountered something horrible in the astral world. Or again, it may arise merely from sympathy with some astral entity who is in a state of terror, for it is a frequent thing on the astral plane that one person should be strongly influenced by sympathy with another's condition.

In coming back to the physical body from the astral world there is a feeling of great constraint, as though one were being enveloped in a thick, heavy cloak. The joy of life on the astral plane is so great that physical life in comparison with it seems no life at all. Many men who can function in the astral world during the sleep of the physical body regard the daily return to the physical world as men often do their daily journey to the office. They do not positively dislike it, but they would not do it unless they were compelled.

Nine persons out of ten, when in the astral body, thus do not at all like returning to the physical body, and few care whether the physical brain remembers or not. But if a man specially wishes to get into the habit of remembering, the procedure recommended is the following :

1. As his last thought before he sinks to sleep is of immense importance, and affects him physically, mentally and morally, he should make a special point of raising his thoughts to the loftiest level of which he is capable, before allowing himself to sink into slumber, though, as stated before, he invariably ought to do this whether he wants to remember his astral experience or not.

2. When he lies down to sleep, he should think of the aura (see end of this Chapter) which surrounds him, and will strongly that the outer surface of that aura shall become a shell to protect him from the impingement of influences from without—from the turbid current of the thoughts of others—and the auric matter will obey his thought: a magnetic shell will really be formed around him, and the outside thought-stream will be excluded, even though his etheric brain may go on evolving pictures (from within) for itself.

3. When he is out of the body, he should first try to remember that he is in the astral world.

4. Then, to make the link between the physical and the astral memory, he should remember (when out of the body) that he wishes to do so, and that it would be a comfort to the physical consciousness if memory could be carried through.

5. Then he must determine to come back into the body slowly, instead of with a rush and a little jerk, as is usually the case; it is this jerk which prevents him from remembering.

6. He should stop himself and say, just before he awakes: "This is my body; I am just about to enter it. As soon as I am in it, I will make it sit up and write down all it can remember." Then he should enter it calmly, sit up instantly and write down all he might be able to remember *at once*. If he waits a few minutes, all will usually be lost. But each fact that he brings through will serve as a link for other memories. The notes may seem a little incoherent when he reads them over afterwards, but he should not mind that; it is because he is trying to give an account in physical words of the experiences of another plane. In this way he will gradually recover the memory, though it may take a long time.

He should be systematic in his efforts. Every time that he succeeds in bringing something through, it will make it easier to remember next time, and will bring nearer the period when there will be habitual automatic recollection. At present there is a moment of unconsciousness between sleeping and waking, and this acts as a veil. It is caused by the closely-woven web of atomic matter through which the vibrations have to pass.

Q. Can we recognise a friend or acquaintance in the astral or the mental world by his appearance in the absence of his physical body?

Ans. The shape of all the higher bodies is no doubt ovoid, but the matter composing them is not equally distributed throughout the egg. In the midst of this ovoid is the physical body. The physical body strongly attracts astral matter which in its turn strongly attracts the mental. Therefore by far the greater part, *i.e.*, about ninety-nine per cent, of the matter of the astral body, is compressed within the periphery of the physical frame, and the same

holds good for the mental body. If we see the astral body of a man in its own world, apart from the physical body, we shall still perceive the astral matter aggregated in exactly the shape of the physical, although, as the astral matter is more fluidic in its nature, what we see is a body built of dense mist, in the midst of an ovoid of much finer mist. The same is true of the mental body. Therefore, if in the astral or the mental world we should meet an acquaintance, we should recognise him by his appearance just as instantly as in the physical world.

Q. But what is the aureola seen sometimes in pictures round the heads of saints ?

Ans. Every human being is surrounded by a luminous cloud, called the aura, a subtle portion of fine matter extending all round the physical body to a distance of eighteen to twenty-four inches. It is oval in shape, hence is sometimes spoken of as the auric egg, and has no well-defined outline, its edges gradually fading into nothingness. Part of that aura, more developed for a saint, is shown as a circle of rays round the head of the portrait and is called the aureola or glory. Not alone around the human body but also around animals, trees and even minerals, the aura is to be seen as a cloud of light surrounding or emanating from them, though less extended or complex than that of man.

The human aura consists of matter in different states, and five of its component parts are visible to a clairvoyant sight, each, as it were, an aura in itself, occupying the entire space if the other four were withdrawn.

The first, called the health aura, from the fact that its condition is greatly affected by the health of the physical man, is composed purely of fine physical matter, is a faint bluish-white, almost colourless, and for a healthy man is striated in appearance with a number of straight lines

radiating from the body on all sides. These lines, rigid and parallel during health owing to the constant radiation of an abundance of life-force from the healthy body, become, during disease, erratic, confused and drooping like the stems of faded flowers.

The second is called the Prāṇic aura as it consists of the matter of specialised Prāṇa, constantly radiating from the body in all directions, and has a faint bluish-white hue, though the Prāṇa circulating in the body has a rosy colour. It is to the radiation of the Prāṇic aura that the parallelism of the health aura is due. The Prāṇic aura is often spoken of as the magnetic aura and is used in the production of many of the physical phenomena of magnetism.

The third aura is that which expresses Kāma or desire, *i.e.*, is the field of manifestation of Kāma. From it is formed the astral body for the man to travel in the astral world during the sleep of the physical body. There is little of permanency about its manifestations, as its colours, brilliancy and rate of vibration are changing every moment; for example, a fit of passion will charge the whole of the aura with deep red flashes on a background of sooty blackness, while a sudden fright will turn the whole into a palpitating livid grey mass.

The fourth is the aura of the lower Manas, the manifestation of the personality. From this aura the mental body of the ordinary man is formed. It is also used to make what is called the māyāvīrupa, a body which functions on the mental plane, but brings its owner into touch with the astral at the same time, and is used on both these planes by Adepts and some of Their disciples and others who are able to form it. In this aura are seen beams of spirituality and intellectuality, while strong desires habitually repeated in the Kāmic aura, setting up corresponding

vibrations in this aura, produce there a permanent tinge of the same colour wherefrom the general disposition and character of a man can be read. This aura is thus the record of the progress of the personality, as explained before in the case of the mental body.

The fifth aura, that of the higher Manas or Individuality, not distinguishable round every person, is of inconceivable beauty and is in fact the causal body, the vehicle of the Reincarnating Ego, and shows by its condition the degree of his advancement since individualisation.

The same colour significance obtains in all these auras, as explained before for the various bodies.

When a man during sleep passes on to the astral plane in his astral body, he takes the lower and higher Mānasic auras also with him, leaving behind with his physical body in bed the first two auras together with a pale residuum of the third not wanted in the formation of the astral body. Of course if he passes in a subtle vehicle to the higher mental plane, he leaves very much more behind him.

A sixth and a seventh aura also exist, but no information about them is at present available.

These auras are not mere emanations, but are manifestations or expressions of the man on different planes.

CHAPTER IV

REINCARNATION

Question. What is reincarnation ?

Answer. It is rebirth, the descent of the human soul into successive physical bodies. Each man has to pass through many lives, returning to earth again and again and dwelling each time in a different earthly body according to the Law of Karma whereby each one reaps whatever he has sown in previous lives.

Q. But what is it that reincarnates, and what is the object of reincarnation ?

Ans. Reincarnation, as far as the derivation of the word (*re*, again, *in*, into, and *caro*, flesh—gen. *carnis*) is concerned, means “repeated entering into physical or fleshly covering,” and implies the existence of something relatively permanent that enters into something relatively impermanent. Man is a spiritual intelligence clothed in bodies of matter. That intelligence which has to unfold all his powers and divine capacities develops by descending into gross matter and then ascending again with the result of the experiences so obtained. It is the ego, *i.e.*, the fifth principle, *Manas*, with the two higher principles, *Buddhi* and *Ātmā*, which assumes different bodies, though his natural dwelling place is in the higher and spiritual regions. He is not manifestly divine and has to learn to master matter

by long experience and many lessons. As a bird soaring in the air dives into water to catch his prey, and then rises again into his own habitat, so is it with the real man, the spiritual being belonging to the higher worlds, who plunges down to earth to gain the experience which is the nourishment for the Spirit's unfolding and which he carries home with him for assimilation into innate capacities and powers, mental and moral. When the experience of one life is assimilated, he returns to the earth for another life, in order to gain more.

He first comes to the earth and takes a body prepared for him, generally the body of a savage, to learn the first lessons of human experience. He then passes to the other side of death and learns by the lessons of pain the errors he has made, and by the lessons of enjoyment the right thoughts and feelings he has had, while during the latter part of that post-mortem life he assimilates what he has gathered on earth. When that experience is assimilated, he comes to earth again for further gain and enters a better body suited to his more unfolded condition. His real life thus covers millions of years, and what we commonly consider as his life is only a day in his life, as a life of about sixty years in this world is ordinarily succeeded in the higher worlds by a period of five to twenty times that length according to development. Each life is a day at school, and each time we return to earth, we resume our lessons where we have left off before, aided by what we have gained by home-study—study in heaven which is the home of the soul. The savage is just commencing his human education, while a spiritually developed man is nearing his graduation in this world-school. Some pupils, being apt, learn quickly, while other egos are like dull boys who take a longer time to learn their lessons. No pupil

ever fails, but the length of time he takes to qualify himself for the higher examination is left to his own discretion. A wise pupil, seeing that this school-life is merely a preparation for a wider one, makes the best of his time and tries hard to master the rules of the school and shape his life in accordance with them.

Q. But have we not sufferings enough in one life? The thought of being reborn to suffer over and over again is horrible.

Ans. Dislike for, or lack of understanding the purpose of, existence does not alter facts. If suffering and sorrow were unknown in the world, would we not be filled with extreme pain to leave this land of bliss when the call of death came, and would we not in that case welcome reincarnation? Thus what we object to is not reincarnation, but the trials and sufferings of earthly life. But the difficulties and sorrows give us experience, teach us some of the grandest lessons of life and force us to develop powers which would otherwise never be awakened into activity. As will be explained later in Chapter V, we reap as we sow, suffer in the present life for the misdeeds of the past, and none but ourselves can cause us suffering.

Q. But is it not unjust for us to be punished for forgotten misdeeds perpetrated long ago in a past life? Why should a man suffer for what he is not conscious of having done?

Ans. A man may suffer from a disease in ignorance of the conditions under which its germs were sown in his body, but the right sequence of cause and effect is not imperilled by his ignorance, for there is no such absurdity in the universe as an effect without a responsible cause.

Again, does forgetfulness of misdeeds destroy their consequences, and does he not equally enjoy the fruit of good deeds which he does not remember doing ?

As a matter of fact, the real man, the ego, does not forget his misdeeds, but remembers them as we remember what we did yesterday, though the physical-brain memory of the new body does not recollect what was done in the body he wore in the last life. A boy stealing apples to-day *requires punishment when caught the next day even though he may have put on a different suit of clothes.* The ego that makes the Karma reaps the Karma. The labourer that sowed the seed gathers in the harvest, though the clothes in which he worked as sower may have worn out during the interval between the sowing and the reaping. The physical as well as the astral and mental garments of the ego have similarly fallen to pieces between seed-time and harvest, and he reaps in a new suit of clothes ; but he who sowed also reaps, and if he sowed but little seed or seed badly chosen, it is he who will find a poor harvest when he goes forth as reaper.

If we were to remember all our past misdeeds, we would be staggered by the painful vision of a past always full of weakness, even when free from the actual stain of crime ; and if we knew that each one of our past errors, ever present before our eyes, would carry with it its punishment, would we not be haunted by fear at every step in our present life, and would not life be transformed into an endless torment out of all proportion to the actual sin ? Talking only of one life, many a criminal would go forward if only he could forget ; but the memory of his crime is a fetter preventing his recovery and progress ; and how much happier many of us would be if we could forget much of the past of this one life. Not until we are strong

enough to bear the memory of the present life without regret, remorse or anxiety, and above all without resentment, should we desire to add to that burden of one life the burden of a long millennial past.

So it is a merciful Banker who saves us all the trouble of keeping accounts and, whenever we are ready to start a new ledger, strikes the balance and turns over our net proceeds with all accrued interest.

Again, after death the soul, free from his illusory sheaths, makes an impartial review of the past, notes his errors and failures with their motives, and by knowledge thus gained grows in wisdom and in power, in intelligence and in conscience.

Q. But why have we no memory of past lives? We remember whatever we have experienced and if we have lived before, why should we forget?

Ans. First let us note the fact that we forget more of the present life than we remember. We do not remember learning to read, but the fact that we can read proves the learning. We avoid being burnt by fire, but do not remember at what particular time we first got burnt and learnt the lesson. Again, these events are not wholly forgotten; they are submerged, not destroyed, and may be drawn from the depths of memory, may be recovered from a person's subconsciousness if he is thrown into a mesmeric trance. If this forgetfulness be true of experiences encountered in our present body, how should we expect our present brain to remember experiences in which that brain and body had no share at all? Our causal and higher bodies remain with us throughout the whole series of incarnations, but the physical, astral and mental bodies fall away at each incarnation; and when we are reclothed for a new life in three mortal bodies, those new bodies

receive from the reincarnating spiritual intelligence, not the detailed experiences of the past, but the qualities, tendencies and capacities made out of those experiences; and our conscience, our instinctive response to emotional and intellectual appeals, our assent to fundamental principles of right and wrong, are traces of past experience.

There are many unconscious memories, manifesting in faculty, in emotion, in power—traces of the past imprinted on the present and discoverable by observations on ourselves and others. We gain our physical bodies, according to our Karma, from our parents through what is called physical heredity; but the mentality that we have, as well as our very character, we have built up for ourselves. Each life we bring with us certain tendencies, which are the summed up memories of past lives; certain powers which are likewise the summed up activities of the past; and certain characteristics, certain faculties, which soon show themselves in the child, which tell us what we have done or have not done during earlier lives on earth. Hence memories of the past may be clear and definite, obtained by the practice of yoga—a system of training and discipline—or may be unconscious but shown by results, and closely allied in many ways to what are called instincts, by which we do certain things, think along certain lines, exercise certain functions, and possess certain knowledge without having consciously acquired it. In the researches of psychology to-day, many surges of feeling, driving a man to hasty, unpremeditated action, are ascribed to the subconscious, *i.e.*, the consciousness which shows itself in involuntary thoughts, feelings and actions; they come to us out of the far-off past, without our volition or our conscious creation. Our instincts are memories buried in the sub-conscious, influencing our actions and determining

our choices ; our moral instinct is Conscience, a mass of interwoven memories of past experiences, speaking with the authoritative utterance of all instincts, deciding on "right" and "wrong" without argument or reasoning, and giving warning of dangers experienced in the past.

Innate faculty—what is it but an unconscious memory of subjects mastered in the past ? Here we have a proof of the accuracy of Plato's idea that all knowledge is reminiscence. Having learnt a subject, *e.g.*, Mathematics, in this life and forgotten it for years, we can re-learn it very quickly as it is a mere traversing of old ground. Similarly, when a science or philosophy is quickly grasped and applied, or an art mastered without much study, the memory of past lives is there in power, though the facts of learning are forgotten. Thus it is that a man who had studied occultism in a past life, coming across Theosophy in this life, takes it up immediately as if resuming an old thread and makes rapid progress, while another studying it for the first time in this life does not go far.

Again, when we feel at home with a stranger at the very first meeting, or fall in love at first sight, memory is there, the Spirit's recognition of a friend of former lives, the call of Ego to Ego, old friends clasping hands in perfect confidence and mutual understanding. Similarly is memory present when we shrink with a feeling of repulsion from an apparent stranger, which is but the recognition of an ancient enemy.

Memory of past lives is, however, occasionally found in children having fleeting glimpses of their past life and sometimes remembering full details, especially if they died a violent death in the last life. Moreover, such memory can be gained, though the gaining requires a steady effort and prolonged meditation to control the ever

restless mind and to make it sensitive and responsive to the Spirit manifested as an ego, who alone stores all memories of the past ; then the scenes of the past are recalled, old friends recognised, old links seen. The fact is that the ego has been through all these events, and has in the heaven-world after death worked up the experiences into faculties and character, into intellect and conscience. But only when a man reaches the memory of the ego and becomes one with him consciously, can he remember all in his new brain.

No brain can store the memory with all the details of the events of numerous past lives, and even if it could, as mere details they would be worthless to a man who had to act on the spur of the moment. If each time we came near a fire, we had to remember all the pains of being burnt previously, we should be burnt time after time before we could go through all the details of the past memories and deduce from them a line of conduct. But when these events are concreted into moral and mental judgments, they are available for immediate use. The memory of numerous murders committed would be a useless burden, though the instinct of the sanctity of human life is an effective memory of them.

An elderly man is wiser and more intelligent than a young lad, because he has gained greater experience. Similarly, a civilised man is wiser than a savage because he has passed through more incarnations.

Q. But it is not always that an elderly man is wiser and more intelligent than a boy ; a civilised youth of twenty years is more intelligent than a coolie of fifty.

Ans. This only strengthens the theory of reincarnation. A boy of ten years and *ten* days is wiser than another boy of five years and *fifty* days, as days count nothing before

years. Similarly, because years count nothing before lives, a youth of *twenty* years and probably one thousand lives behind him must be wiser than a coolie of *fifty* years and, say, of only one hundred lives. But if we do not accept reincarnation, all children ought to be born with the same amount of intelligence, which is not the case. Reincarnation alone explains the difference between them—the difference in their growth due to the different ages of the soul.

Q. But if a negro boy be nurtured and trained in Europe, will he not be as intelligent and wise as a European boy?

Ans. If intelligence depended on education in youth, two children of the same parents, similarly trained and brought up, ought to be equally intelligent and equally wise or foolish. Not only is this not so, but very often it is just the reverse, as one brother is wise and virtuous, while the other is foolish and vicious. Again twins, undistinguishable in their infancy, grow widely different in spite of similarity of training and education in all respects.

The negro is bright up to a certain point, and then suddenly stops, to the disappointment of his teacher who thought he would go far. Reincarnation explains that a child comes into the world with a character, with qualities, characteristics, powers and deficiencies, that we may to some extent mould and modify that character, but that our powers in that respect are very limited. As Ludwig Buchner said: "Nature is stronger than nurture."

Q. But the physical, mental and moral peculiarities of children come from the parents by the law of Heredity; what wonder, then, that a European child is intelligent and a negro one stupid? Does reincarnation ignore that law?

Ans. No ; on the contrary it endorses that law on the physical plane. In providing physical bodies parents stamp them with their signet, and so the molecules in the child's body carry with them the habit of vibrating in definite ways. Thus are hereditary diseases conveyed to children, and little tricks of manner and habits are also similarly transmitted.

But transmission of mental and moral likenesses and peculiarities is true only within limits, and not to the extent taken for granted. Etheric atoms are contributed by parents like physical ones, as are also kâmic elements, especially by the mother ; and these, working on the molecules of the brain, give to the child the passional characteristics of the parents, partly modifying the manifestations of the ego of the child. Reincarnation, while admitting all these parental influences on the child, goes further and states that there is an independent action of the ego, the inherent tendency of his nature, and thus gives a full explanation of differences as well as similarities. Heredity can explain only similarities, not differences.

Again, heredity though explaining the evolution of bodies, throws no light on the evolution of intelligence and conscience, and later studies show that acquired qualities are not transmissible and that genius is often sterile.

There are conspicuous violations of the law of Heredity which are easily explained by reincarnation, and the following cases prove the inadequacy of merely hereditary influences :

1. Children of same parents, not equally intelligent, nor of equal moral tendencies.
2. The life-history of twins showing that two individuals born under precisely identical conditions and

having exactly the same heredity often differ greatly in physique, intellect and character.

3. The wide difference in character and intellect between father and son in spite of their physical resemblance.

4. The birth of geniuses in humble and commonplace circumstances, furnishing abundant evidence that the individual soul outstrips the bonds of physical birth.

5. Mediocre children of distinguished parents, showing the inadequacy of hereditary influences in mental and moral powers and capacities.

6. Profligates born to saintly parents.

7. *Saintly children born to profligates.*

8. *Great moral geniuses, like Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus, etc., whose birth cannot be explained by heredity.*

9. Musical instinct or artistic tendency in one brother, without the other brother having even an elementary notion of the art.

All these cases can be satisfactorily and easily explained by reincarnation.

Q. Can there not be special creation by God for each soul? There can be three explanations of human inequalities, of differences of faculties, opportunities and circumstances: the scientific law of Heredity, special creation by God, and Reincarnation. You have refuted the first; what about the second?

Ans. The law of Evolution is accepted on all hands for everything except man. What begins in time, must end in time, and the idea of special creation involves the correlative of annihilation at death; but the spiritual intelligence called man is supposed to have no individual

past though it is admitted to have an endless future, which looks like a stick existing with one end only.

A man's character on which his whole destiny depends is, on this hypothesis, specially created for him by God and imposed on him without any choice of his own. If he is gifted with a noble nature and fine capacities, he may be thankful, though he has done nothing to deserve them. If he inherits a congenital disease, congenital criminality or evil nature, or if he is born a cripple or an idiot, he has equally done nothing to deserve them. Everything depends on mere chance, or on the whim or arbitrary will of God. But if this be so, where is the justice of the All-just God, to say nothing of the love of the *All-loving Father*? It is sometimes said that all these things will be adjusted in the life to come. This may be so, but it does not give any rational explanation as to why they are so in the life here, nor does it seem reasonable specially to exclude human life on earth from the scope of the law and order, of the exquisite design and purpose, which obtain everywhere in the natural world.

Again, a babe dies a few hours after birth, after a spirit was specially created for it. That spirit will be the poorer for ever for missing that life and its experiences on earth. But if earthly experiences have no use later on, and if life on earth has no permanent value except that of being judged for eternal hell or eternal heaven, a spirit coming into a body which lives up to old age may be said to be badly treated, as it has to endure trouble, misery and sins, and to run the risk of going to hell at last, whereas the babe runs no risk, suffers no misery and is as well off in the end as the other spirit.

Moreover, this theory makes God a servant of man as He may have to wait for creating a new soul till a man,

constant; and a little quickening of reincarnation or shortening of heaven-period would increase the physical population of our globe very greatly without any increase in the total number of incarnating spirits.

Moreover, there is no reliable proof that the population of our earth has increased, for though the census may be fairly accurate in some countries, it is mere guess work in a thickly populated country like China.

Q. Now about reincarnation ; what is its necessity ?

Ans. Reincarnation is necessary logically, scientifically and morally.

Q. Please explain each in detail. First, what is the argument from logic ?

Ans. Reincarnation is necessary logically, as without it, with nothing to satisfy the reason, life is a hopeless riddle.

Is there any purpose in our life between the cradle and the grave? Do we, or do we not, prepare ourselves in some way for the life beyond death? If there is a life of happiness on the other side of death, it is earned in some way, either by resisting temptation or by positive well-doing. If effort is necessary for earning the heavenly life, the case seems hard for a babe who dies in infancy and has no chance. Or perhaps it is that such a one, having done no wrong, enters heaven. Then it seems hard for others who have to live a long life of temptation and dangers and run the risk of going to hell at last, while again in that case every mother should pray, not that her new-born babe might live and thrive, but that it should die immediately. Also if the result be the same, so that a babe dying in infancy and a good man living up to a ripe old age both go to heaven, then life is a snare and worse than useless as it is full of needless pain and misery.

Moreover, if heavenly life is to be earned by individual effort, equal chances must be given to all. But we see that it is not so when men are born differently with different powers, capacities and opportunities and amid different circumstances and environments, one a savage, an imbecile or a congenital criminal, and another endowed with good tendencies and favourable opportunities. Nor can it be that little is expected from the one and much from the other, for it would be but an admission that this life is needless and that it is right that the one should pass here a life of ignorance and pain, and the other of refinement and pleasure, and yet both reap the same result. Nor will it do to say that the one receives a higher seat in the heaven-world, because of his greater difficulties here, for then the other may demand that he, too, should receive an equal chance to reach the highest.

All these problems seem difficult to solve, but the theory of reincarnation makes everything readily intelligible.

Take a savage without mind or morals who finds his own wife the most convenient thing for dinner, eats his parents when they are *no longer* useful and his own children because they are not *yet* useful ; he murders, he robs, he drinks, and is eventually killed by one stronger than himself. Is that narrow brutal life all that the world has to give him, the world which to some is so fair, marvellous and full of beauty ? What is to become of him on the other side of death ? He cannot be sent to heaven, yet it is hardly fair to send him to hell.

Now look at him in the light of reincarnation. After his physical body is struck away and he goes to the intermediate world, he discovers that those he killed are all living, and that not having forgotten the past they have a

very unpleasant welcome for him there. He thus begins to learn his first lesson that if he kills a man one day, he will meet him the next day. He does not learn that in one life, but takes many lives to do so. Again, some good after-death experience he will have in the heaven-world. He will have had some little affection for his wife and children before the greater need of hunger overbore it, and that little germ will grow and make him happy and will be changed into a moral quality with which he will be reborn and will also bring a tendency to hesitate before slaying. Thus each life he gathers experiences, transmutes them into qualities and faculties, and thereby grows a little more civilised till he comes to the point at which our children are being born to-day.

Again, if reincarnation be not a fact, what becomes of the qualities which we build even in one life with effort and difficulty? A man becomes wise when he has attained old age, but he dies when he is most valuable; and if, being irretrievably saved or damned, he is taken into worlds where that knowledge acquired through many experiences is useless for ever, the whole of human life becomes irrational. But reincarnation explains that the man is reborn with those qualities as a part of his character and that therefore nothing is lost. Thus the more one thinks on reasonable and logical lines, the more inevitable is reincarnation seen to be.

Q. What is the scientific necessity for reincarnation?

Ans. Science now demands reincarnation in order to complete its theory of evolution. There are two great doctrines of evolution which may be said to divide the scientific world. The first is the evolutionary teaching of Charles Darwin; the second is the later teaching of Weissmann. Both these doctrines, important as they

are, need the teaching of reincarnation in order to complete them; for under both certain questions arise to which reincarnation gives the only answer.

Taking Darwin's evolutionary teaching in the broadest possible light, two great points come out as dealing with the progress of intelligence and of morality. First, the idea that qualities are transmitted from parent to offspring, and that by the accumulated force of that transmission intelligence and morality develop. As step after step is taken by humankind, the results of the climbing are transmitted to the offspring, who, starting as it were from the platform built up by the past, are able to climb further in the present, and transmit enriched to their posterity the legacy that they receive. Secondly, side by side with that stands the doctrine of conflict, of what is called 'Survival of the fittest'; of qualities which enable some to survive, and by the survival to hand down to their progeny those qualities that gave them an advantage in the struggle for existence.

Now those two chief points—transmission of quality from parent to offspring, and survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence—are two of the problems that are very difficult to deal with from the ordinary Darwinian standpoint. Taking at first the second point, how are social and moral qualities evolved? Certainly not by the *struggle for existence*. *The qualities that are the most purely human, e.g. compassion, love, sympathy, the sacrifice of the strong for the protection of the weak, the willingness to give one's life for the benefit of others, are the qualities that we recognise as human against the qualities that we share with the brute. The more of these qualities show out in man, the more human is man considered to be. But those who sacrifice themselves die out. Among the*

social animals and even among the fiercest, the beasts of prey, the mother sacrifices herself for her helpless offspring, conquering the law of self-preservation. The mother-bird or the mother-animal, will sacrifice her own life in order to draw away her enemy, man, from the cave or the hiding place where her young ones are hidden, mother-love triumphing even over the love of life. But she dies in the sacrifice. Those who show it most perish—sacrifices to maternal affection. And among men, the social and moral qualities are evolved, not by the struggle for existence where the keenest brain and the most unscrupulous conscience carry the day. The human qualities of tenderness and compassion can be evolved only by self-sacrifice; but there, as in the animal kingdom, the man who sacrifices himself dies; and if the social virtues or the human virtues tend to kill out their possessors, and to leave the more selfish and more brutal alive, how can we explain in man the growth of the spirit of self-sacrifice, the continuing growth of the most divine qualities which incapacitate the man for the struggle of existence?

Those who have studied Darwinian writings know that this question is not fully faced there, and is rather evaded than answered. Reincarnation gives the answer, that in the continuing life, whether of the animal or of the man the self-sacrifice stirs up on the side of character a new power, a new life, a compelling strength, which comes back over and over again to the world in ever higher and higher manifestations; that though the form of the mother perishes, the mother-soul survives, and comes back time after time; and that those who are such mother-souls are trained onward, first in the brute kingdom and then in the human kingdom, so that that which is gained by the soul at the sacrifice of the body comes back in the reincarnating

soul to bless and to lift the world. Thus every martyr who dies for truth, every hero who sacrifices his life for his country, every doctor who loses his life in a combat with some terrible disease, every mother who sacrifices herself for her child, comes back to earth the richer for the sacrifice, with those qualities wrought into the soul's very nature, and reaps the results of the self-sacrifice in greater power to help.

Then, regarding the first point *i.e.*, transmission of qualities, Weissmann has established two fundamental facts, first the continuity of physical life—and it will be seen that to be complete it needs the continuity of intellectual and moral life. The reason for the latter along the Weissmann line is his second fundamental fact that mental and moral and other acquired qualities are not transferred to offspring, that they can only be transmitted when they have worked themselves slowly and by degrees into the very fabric of the physical body of the people concerned. Mental and moral qualities not being transmitted, where can we have the reason for human progress, unless, side by side with the continuity of protoplasm, we have the continuity of an evolving, developing soul? That continuity of the evolving soul is necessary, also because, along with the same theory, backed up as it is by facts of observation, we find that the higher the organism, the greater the tendency towards sterility or towards a very great limiting of the number of offspring produced. In fact, it is becoming almost a commonplace in science that 'genius is sterile,' and by that it is meant that the genius does not tend in the first place largely to increase the number of the race, and secondly, that even where the genius has a child, the child does not show the qualities of the genius, but for the most part is

commonplace, tending even to be below the average of the time.

Genius is to be found along two special lines—that of pure intellect or virtue, and that of art which demands a co-operation of the physical body. The first asks little or nothing from physical heredity, but we cannot have the great genius in music unless we have with it a specialised physical body with a delicacy of nervous organisation, a fineness of touch and a keenness of ear. These physical factors are required in order that musical genius may show itself forth at its highest. There the co-operation of physical heredity is demanded. When we read the stories of a musical genius we find that he is generally born in a musical family; that for two or three generations before that of the great genius, some amount of musical talent has been marked in the family in which he appears; and that when the genius appears, the musical talent dies out, and the family goes back into the ordinary rut of average people. The family flowers in the genius; he does not hand on his genius to his posterity.

Now these problems and puzzles of heredity find their rational explanation in the teaching of Reincarnation. A musical genius has need of a specialised body born in a musical family under the law of Heredity; but, as already explained, that law holds good for the physical body alone, and mental and moral character is not transmissible. And the genius does not come into the world, suddenly God-created, or as a mere sport of nature, or the result of some fortunate accident. He comes with the qualities he has gradually developed by struggle in his past. At the bottom of the human ladder of progress stands the lowest savage; at the

top of that human ladder, the greatest saint and the noblest intellect, geniuses built by slow degrees, built up by countless struggles, by failure as well as victory, by evil as well as good. The evils of the past are the steps whereon man rises into virtue, so that even in the lowest criminal we see the promise of divinity. He too shall rise where the saint is standing, and in all the children of men God shall at last be seen.

That explains why man should have progressed, even though Weissmann be right when he says that acquired qualities are not transmitted; for those mental and moral qualities are not the gift of the parent, they are the hard-won spoils of victory of the individual soul; and each soul comes back to his birth into the new body with the results of his past lives in his hand to work with in the present.

Thus reincarnation with its lessons in the evolution of life fills up the gaps in the scientific theory and makes intelligible the progress of character and intelligence, side by side with the evolution of form.

Again, wherever we go through nature, looking at things of the same kind, we find them at different stages of growth; and we constantly find in the more developed creature marks of the past along which he has evolved. And similarly, when we look at man, we see all stages of intelligence and all stages of moral growth. How are they to be explained *scientifically*? Certainly not by the principle—thrown out everywhere by science—of sudden creation, of a sudden appearance without cause, without antecedents, without anything to explain it. Then why these great differences? Or why even the small differences? If we say "Growth," we are on sound scientific ground, because everywhere in nature we see growth, differences of size, differences of development;

and the marks of growth of intelligence and of morality that we see among men are clear signs of a past, of differences of soul-age. Moreover, we find in human intelligence marks of its past, similar to the marks of the past in human bodies; intelligence in a new body swiftly runs over its past evolution, as all careful observers of the unfolding of intelligence in the child know well.

Q. Now what do you mean by the moral necessity for reincarnation?

Ans. The third necessity, the moral one, is the most potent argument for reincarnation, as otherwise there can be no divine justice, no love in this universe. The two other possibilities for human inequalities, *i.e.*, heredity and special creation, have already been shown to be unreasonable. One is born a cripple, another an athlete. Why? One is a congenital idiot, another a genius gifted with brilliant intellectual powers; one magnanimous, another greedy and grasping. Again why? If God made the difference, it means injustice, helplessness and consequent hopelessness. One soul born in the slums from a harlot mother and a drunkard father, taught nothing but crime and curses, compelled to steal for his supper, knowing nothing of kindness or love, becomes a habitual criminal, and striking some one hard in passion, while drunk, kills him and is sent to the gallows. Where would he go after death? He is too foul for heaven, while he cannot be sent to everlasting hell when he had no chance at all in life. Another soul is reared in a refined family and tenderly guarded by loving parents. He is coaxed into virtue and given the best education. Throughout life he is laden with prizes for the abilities he did not make and dies after a life of usefulness and glory. What has he done to deserve all this? If each has been born under

special creation with everlasting heaven or hell to follow after death, is it Divine Justice? Has not the criminal the right to demand of God, "Why didst Thou make me so?"

But Reincarnation restores justice to God and power to man and explains that the criminal is a young and unevolved soul, a savage who has started in the stream of evolution at a later period than the other who is a soul of long experience with many lives behind him, that both are the results of their past, and that the differences between them are only those of age and growth.

Amongst many others, Reincarnation solves the following problems:

1. It explains the present inequalities of social condition and privilege.

2. It removes the metaphysical necessity of having to place in the very heart of the Supreme the principle of injustice.

3. It introduces into the moral and spiritual worlds the same order which observation and science have discovered in the physical.

4. It explains the appearance of men of genius in families destitute of unusual abilities in its other members.

5. It explains the frequently occurring cases of unfitness of environment which often embitter disposition and paralyse endeavour.

6. It explains the violent antithesis between character and condition by showing that it is the result of growth, not of divine fiat.

7. It explains the variations of the moral sense in mankind, *i.e.*, problems of conscience.

8. It explains the occurrence of accident, misfortune and untimely or sudden death.

9. It explains the possession by individuals of psychic powers.

10. It gives the reason for and rationale of Darwinian Evolution.

11. It affords a rational solution of the problem of what will be the future of men who, having been granted a physical existence by God, have never learned to value it, *e.g.*, the miser, whose only enjoyment is to count a number of yellow pieces of metal; or the sensualist who has no higher conception of life than bestiality.

12. It explains the tremendous contradiction which often exists between our desires and our will, our character as known to ourselves and our actions as seen by others.

13. It solves the difficulty of reconciling the Love of God with His Power.

14. It explains the apparently meaningless caprice of death.

Q. What about the new-born babe who dies immediately after birth? How can you explain that useless birth?

Ans. One of the factors under which reincarnation takes place is the Law of Karma or the Law of Cause and Effect (see Chapter V), and such an ego had become indebted to that law by causing the death of some one without malice or intention, killing merely through carelessness like throwing away a burning match, after lighting a cigar, which fell on a heap of straw, set fire to a house and burnt its inmate to death. Such an ego has to pay for his carelessness, not criminality, by a brief delay in taking a new body. He pays by the early loss of the child-body and consequent delay, but immediately takes another, ordinarily within a few months.

But it is the parents who suffer most in such cases. Why? Possibly those parents in a previous life had been guardians to a distant relative's orphan child simply for appearance' sake and had shown unkindness or active cruelty to him, so much so that the child had died. By the Law of Karma, they reap as they had sown, and they have to pay the debt standing against them, for their lack of love, in the loss of the body of their own child, dear to their hearts, and thus learn tenderness and kindness for all children alike. The child dying immediately after birth loses nothing : only his progress is delayed a little ; but the parents suffer, as they deserve by their karma in the loss of their long-hoped-for child. Their karma is thus brought into touch with that of the person who owes the debt of life, and both destinies are worked out in the death of the child.

Q. To what extent is the belief in Reincarnation found in religions and philosophy, ancient and modern ? What is the approximate number of people who believe in the idea of Reincarnation as part of their religious creed ?

Ans. The philosophy of Reincarnation antedates the remotest antiquity all over the world as it is a necessary corollary of the immortality of the soul. Reincarnation is taught in the great epics of the Hindus as an undoubted fact on which morality is based. The Egyptians undeniably taught this doctrine, and their conception of it as shaped by the priesthood is displayed in their classic, *The Book of the Dead*, one of their chief scriptures, describing the course of the soul after death, a copy of which was deposited in each mummy case. In the old Persian faith it is scarcely discernible in the extant writings of the Avestâ—the major part having been irretrievably lost—though a

passage is found in the *Vandidād*—the most orthodox of the Zoroastrian books—which refers to the doctrine of the transmigration of animal life. The Buddha taught it and constantly spoke of His past births. Among the scattered remnants of old races on the American continent, the belief is occasionally found, as among the Zuni Indians. The Hebrews now do not seem to accept reincarnation, though taught in the *Kabala*, and belief in it in the old times peeps out from it here and there. In the *Wisdom of Solomon* it is stated that coming into an undefiled body was the reward of “being good”. At the most, a few thousands among those reckoned as Christians believe it at the present time, and Christianity now rejects it though the Christ accepted it by telling His disciples that John the Baptist was Elijah; while Origen, the most learned of the Christian Fathers, declared that “every man received a body according to his deserts and his former actions”. The Sufi Muhammadans hold that belief, and it comes to us in the Middle Ages from a learned son of Islām, Jalāl-ud-Din Rumi, the Persian poet and mystic :

“ I died from the mineral, and became a plant ;
I died from the plant and reappeared in an
animal ;
I died from the animal and became a man,
Wherefore then should I fear ? When did I grow
less by dying ?
Next time I shall die from the man,
That I may grow the wings of the angel.”

As Max Müller truly remarked, the greatest minds that humanity has produced have accepted Reincarnation. Pythagoras taught it, and Plato included it in his philosophical writings. Virgil and Ovid take it for granted. The Neo-Platonic schools accepted it, and the Gnostics

and Manichæans believed in it. In later time we find it taught by Schopenhauer, Fichte, Schelling, Lessing, Henry More, Herder, Southey, Bulwer, Pezzani, to name but a few among the western philosophers and authors. Hume declared that it was the only doctrine of immortality a philosopher could look at ; Goethe in his old age looked joyfully forward to his return. Emerson, the Plato of the nineteenth century, as well as Wordsworth, Rossetti, Gosse, Tennyson, Browning, Coleridge, Collins, Bailey, Sharp and other poets believed in it. The reappearance of the belief in Reincarnation is not, therefore, an emergence of a belief of savages among civilised nations, but a sign of recovery from the de-rationalisation of religion, which has made life an unintelligible tangle of injustices and partialities and has given rise to so much scepticism and materialism.

Generally speaking, the people who at the present time believe in Karma and Reincarnation are the Hindus and the Buddhists. The Hindus number about 250,000,000 in the total population of India of nearly 320,000,000. The number of Buddhists is not easy to ascertain accurately as we know hardly anything about the huge population of China. Rhys Davids, relying on census returns, gives the number of Southern Buddhists as 30,000,000 and that of the Northern Buddhists, (counting the total population of China, arrived at mainly by lumping it in,) as 470,000,000 thus making a total of 500,000,000 Buddhists, though Dr. Findlater places the total number of Buddhists in China alone at "more than 340 millions". Thus even at the present moment it would seem that nearly half the human race hold a belief in Karma and Reincarnation, while in the past the proportion would be very much greater as these doctrines were also current in the lands

then dominated by Chaldean, Egyptian and Greek thought.

Q. But is not the doctrine of Reincarnation, though found in the Hindu, Buddhist, Egyptian, Greek and Roman religions, alien at least to Christianity ?

Ans. This question of profound importance is being much discussed to-day by thinkers in the West, and is arousing a good deal of controversy and antagonism which seem rather to be based on ignorance than on study. The doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul and reincarnation branches out along two lines in the early Christian writings, and in the writings of the Jews who preceded the Christians. Sometimes stress is laid upon the fact that the soul did not come into existence with the body, that he is eternal in his nature, or to speak more correctly, the Spirit is eternal and comes forth from God. This branch of the doctrine, then, commonly distinguished as "*the pre-existence of the soul*" simply asserts that the Spirit in man is eternal, comes forth from God ; that there came forth also from God many Spirits who are not incarnate in human form, and that these passed on through various stages and through various worlds until some of them came into the physical world, where they underwent a training which prepared them for a higher evolution, gradually climbing back with the experience that they had gathered into the original purity that they had lost. That doctrine, in the form roughly sketched here, may be said to be universal, both among the Jews and in the early Church. In the more precise and scientific form of reincarnation, *i.e.*, repeated rebirths into the physical form of man on a physical earth, it is found in some of the writings of the early Church, but not in all. Some speak vaguely of pre-existence, others

definitely of repeated births into the world. In both, the principle is the same, the idea that the human Spirit coming forth from God is not inherently holy, save by his derivation from the One Supreme Holiness; that the holiness in nature which is due to his being derived from God may be partially lost for a time. When the Spirit has lost his primitive innocence, then he is spoken of as the soul—the soul being the intermediate state between the Spirit and the body, that which gathers experience, that which passes through the various worlds in the universe, and returns ultimately with the experience he has gathered to his primal home in God.

Now it is found that the Fathers attacked very bitterly and denounced very vehemently one form of the doctrine which was current among the Greeks and the Romans, in the literature of their time; and that is the idea that the human soul can pass into an animal form. But the very fact that that is the only form of pre-existence and reincarnation that they denounced makes all the stronger their general acceptance of the principle just described.

But in order to understand the position in which the Church of Christ arose, a comprehension is necessary of the Jewish environment and the thoughts and views of the Jewish people to whom, of course, the Apostles and the early disciples belonged, and among whom, according to genealogy, Jesus Himself took birth. In the Old Testament, the verse from *Jeremiah*: "Before thou camest forth from the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet" (i, 5), is one that is referred to by several Fathers of the Church in this very relation of the pre-existence of the human soul. Both Origen and Jerome distinctly refer to the statement, that before Jeremiah was born he was sanctified as a prophet,

as one of the proofs from the Holy Scripture of the pre-existence of the soul. For Origen specially points out that divine Justice cannot possibly be defended unless a man, sanctified as a prophet, or born to some great service in the world has earned that pre-eminence by former righteous living or has climbed to that blessing by meritorious action in the past. Then there is the very definite statement in *Malachi*, (iv, 5,) that Elijah will return. Again, there is a very interesting passage in the book of the *Wisdom of Solomon*, in which Solomon says "I was a witty child and had a good Spirit. Yea, rather being good, I came into a body undefiled" (ix, 15). Thus there is the distinct statement that because Solomon was already a good Spirit that he came into a body undefiled. Then again, certain definite statements as regards the Jews of his own time are given by the famous Jewish writer, Josephus. With regard to the Pharisees, in his *De Bello Judaico* (ii, 8), he says: "They say that all souls are incorruptible; but that the souls of good men are only removed into other bodies—but that the souls of bad men are subject to eternal punishment." There is one still better notice in Josephus as to the general beliefs in his own day with regard to the reincarnation of the soul. Having defended the fortress of Jotapata and taken refuge in a cave with some forty of the soldiers who desired to kill each other in order to prevent themselves from falling into the hands of the Romans, Josephus himself addressed the following argument to them: "Do you not remember that all pure Spirits who are in conformity with the divine dispensation, live on in the loveliest of heavenly places, and in course of time they are again sent down to inhabit sinless bodies; but the souls of those who have committed self-destruction

are doomed to a region in the darkness of the underworld?" Now it has fairly been argued by Professor Victor Rydberg, in relation to these words, that the fact that Josephus addressed an argument of this sort to rough soldiers and uneducated men—not to philosophers who are known by their writings to believe and teach reincarnation in those days—shews that the doctrine was generally current among the Jews of his time. Again, in the writings of Philo this doctrine is found distinctly laid down as one of the bases of the great Jewish Alexandrian School. Thus, so far as the Jews were concerned, that doctrine was regularly received among them, and that is important to remember while coming to the words of the disciples of Jesus and their question as to the sin of the man born blind, for it is seen that they were only referring to the current belief of their day.

Glancing at the New Testament, the first interesting thing to notice there is the alleged fulfilment of the prophecy of Malachi as to the return of Elijah, the prophet. It is perfectly true that when S. John the Baptist was asked: "Art thou Elias?" he answered: "No." But Jesus Himself stated exactly the opposite, and said: "This is Elias." The denial of S. John the Baptist is easily explained by the fact that the memory of a past life passes over death and rebirth only in very rare cases as explained before, so that the absence of knowledge on the part of the Baptist is no evidence against the reality of reincarnation, while the twice-repeated statement of the Christ Himself that S. John the Baptist was Elijah (S. Matt., xi, 14 and xvii, 12-13), speaking as He did with knowledge of the past, surely very much outweighs the denial of the Baptist on a point that he could not be

expected to remember. It is interesting also to notice the repetition of character, which is exactly what might be expected—both were preachers of righteousness, both were ascetic by training and fiery by nature, brave in the rebuke of evil in high places, the strong vigorous character of the prophet Elijah reappearing in the equally strong and vigorous character of S. John the Baptist. Again, they bore an outward resemblance to each other with similar peculiarities of dress. Elijah was “a hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins,” while John the Baptist had “his raiment of camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins”. Their home was the solitude of the desert. Elijah journeyed forty days and forty nights unto Horeb, the mount of God in the Wilderness of Sinai (*I Kings*, xix, 8). John the Baptist was in the Wilderness of Judea beyond Jordan baptising (*Mark*, i, 4). And their life in exile—a self-renunciating and voluntary withdrawal from the haunts of men—was sustained in a parallelly remarkable way by food bird-brought or wing-borne. “I have commanded the ravens to feed thee,” said the voice of Divinity to the Prophet (*I Kings*, xvii, 4), while locusts and wild honey were the food of the Baptist (*Matt.*, iii, 4). Thus with the identity of character, certain outward resemblances and the twice-repeated solemn declaration of Jesus Himself, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that S. John the Baptist was really a reincarnation of Elias, if the Gospel be reliable.

Then, the case of the man born blind (*S. John*, ix) does not need labouring. The question is so plain: “Who did sin, this man or his parents?” The disciples realised that this must be the result of some sin or folly; and their question is as to whose sin it was that had brought about

this deplorable result. Was it that the parents had been so wicked that they deserved to have the sorrow of a blind son ; or was it that in some previous state of existence the man himself had sinned, and so brought upon himself this pitiable fate ? Obviously, if the latter were the true solution, the sins which deserved this punishment must have been committed before he was born—that is to say, in a previous life. Thus both the great pillars of Theosophical teaching—Reincarnation and Karma—are clearly implied in this one question. Those who imply by the answer of Jesus “neither did this man sin nor his parents,” a non-belief in reincarnation, will have to take up the extraordinary position that the parents of the man were sinless, for the two are put on exactly the same ground : “Neither this man nor his parents.” But an unbiassed mind, not desiring to twist the text in order to support a preconceived idea, will naturally see in that answer, spoken by One Himself by birth a Jew, and spoken to Jews among whom the doctrine of Reincarnation was current, the simple and direct statement that this man’s blindness was not due to sin in a former life, any more than to the sin of the parents who gave the blind child birth. The Master assigns another and mystical reason, “that the works of God may be manifest in him,” but surely, had He deemed that the conception of rebirth, which was clearly in the minds of His disciples, was erroneous in itself, He would have stated so, as He did elsewhere when they needed correction, and would have rebuked them for their folly with the only answer : “*Why ask me the foolish question whether the man is born blind because of his sin ? How could he sin before birth ?*”

Again, the phrase in *John*, xvi, 2, “In my Father’s house are many halting places,” is very significant.

The word mistranslated 'mansions' is a word used for the rest-houses along the roads of the empire. This is a very suggestive reference to the many rests which the human soul or ego takes in the Father's house between the lives of effort on earth in which his stature is growing. "Be ye perfect" would be an idle command of the Christ if spoken to poor stumbling humanity with but a few years to live, or to drunken loafers whose thoughts are centred on the nearest public house, but a glorious promise if spoken to men who had time in which to grow to the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ". Says the Christ Himself: "The disciple is not above his Master, but every one when he is perfected, shall be as his Master" (*S. Luke*, vi, 40).

There is another text in the *Revelation* which implies reincarnation. It is the verse in which the Son of Man, addressing one of the Seven Churches of Asia, makes the statement of the one who overcomes: "I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go forth no more." That "going forth" which comes to an end with the final overcoming refers to the repeated goings forth of the soul from the heavenly places, which come to an end when the soul is perfected and becomes "a pillar in the temple of My God". "Watchers and Holy Ones, pillars in the temple of God who shall go out thence no more" (*Rev.*, 3, 12).

Pre-existence and rebirth are referred to by many of the Christian Fathers, and were cardinal doctrines among the Gnostics, who represented for several centuries the purer stream of the spiritual and philosophical teaching of the Christ.

In the writings of Origen—the most celebrated pupil of S. Clement of Alexandria and perhaps the most

brilliant and learned of all the Ecclesiastical Fathers—especially in his great treatise *De Principiis*, there is a mine of information as to the teachings of the early Christians, in the second century.

His was the evolutionary view. Referring to S. John the Baptist being filled with the Holy Ghost in his mother's womb (I, vii, 4), he says that some "may think that God fills individuals with His Holy Spirit, and bestows upon them sanctification, not on grounds of justice and according to their deserts, but undeservedly. And how shall we escape that declaration, 'Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.' Or this, 'Is there respect of persons with God?' For such is the defence of those who maintain that souls come into existence with bodies." S. John the Baptist was only filled with the Holy Ghost in his mother's womb because by previous righteous living he had earned that blessing. Origen adds that God "disposes everything according to the deserts and moral progress of each individual," and that this is necessary "to demonstrate the impartiality and righteousness of God, that, conformably with the declaration of the Apostle Paul, 'there is no acceptance of persons with Him.'"

Origen further declares that the condition of a man is the judgment of God on the deeds of each individual and proceeds to illustrate his argument by the famous case of Jacob and Esau (II, ix, 7). That case has sometimes been used as an argument by the Calvinist School for the direct predestination of man by God either to eternal happiness or eternal misery. But according to the teaching of Origen, man being born free could not be predetermined by another will either to happiness or misery, save in the course of justice, as the man himself had deserved it. It

would be unjust if God loved Jacob and hated Esau before the children were born, and the only way to reconcile that declaration with the justice of God is to say that Esau was reaping the fruits of past evil, while Jacob was reaping the fruits of past good. This is the declaration made most definitely alike by Origen and also by Jerome. For Jerome (*Letter to Avitus*) says: "If we examine the case of Esau, we may find that he was condemned because of his ancient sins in a worse course of life"; and so also Origen declares: "It is found not to be unrighteousness that even in the womb Jacob supplanted his brother, if we feel that he was worthily beloved by God, according to the deserts of his previous life, so as to deserve to be preferred before his brother." He adds that this must be "carefully applied to the case of all other creatures, because, as we formerly remarked, the righteousness of the Creator ought to appear in everything". "The inequality of circumstances preserves the justice of a retribution according to merit."

Origen deals admirably with the case of Pharaoh whose heart, it is written, was hardened by God, and points out that in this world it is not always the rapid cure which is the most effective: "Sometimes it does not lead to good results for a man to be cured too quickly, especially if the disease, being shut up in the inner parts of the body, rage with greater fierceness" (III, i, 17). And he declares that the hardening of the heart was intended only to enable Pharaoh to see the evil of his ways, so that in future lives, having learned the lesson that it was a bitter thing to sin against God, he also might turn to righteousness of living, as a good physician of souls sets the remedy to the disease with which the man is afflicted.

From these quotations it can be seen that there is no possibility of challenge of the idea that reincarnation was taught by Origen. But one more quotation may be added, the strongest of all, to demonstrate that Origen has in his mind repeated births into this world, and not only previous experiences in other worlds. "Those who, departing this life in virtue of that death which is common to all, are arranged in conformity with their actions and deserts—according as they shall be deemed worthy—some in the place which is called the '*infernus*,' others in the bosom of Abraham, and in different localities or mansions." These are the conditions in the invisible worlds after death. "So also from these places, as if dying there, if the expression can be used, they come down from the '*upper world*' to this '*hell*'. For that '*hell*' to which the souls of the dead are conducted from this world is, I believe, on account of this distinction, called the '*lower hell*'. . . Everyone, accordingly, of those who descend to the earth is, according to his deserts, or agreeably to the position that he occupied there, ordained to be born in this world in a different country, or among a different nation, or in a different mode of life, or surrounded by infirmities of a different kind, or to be descended from religious parents, or parents who are not religious; so that it may sometimes happen that an Israelite descends among the Scythians, and a poor Egyptian is brought down to Judea" (IV, i, 23). There can hardly be a more definite statement than that as to the rebirth of souls.

If a soul can be made good, then to make a soul evil is impossible to a God of Justice and Love. It cannot be done. There is no justification for it, and the moment it is recognised that men are born criminal, as they are born every year, one is either forced to the blasphemous

position that a perfect and loving God creates a ruined soul and then punishes it for being what He has made it, or else that He is dealing with growing, developing creatures whom He is training for ultimate blessedness, and if in any life a man is born wicked and evil, it is because he has gone amiss and must reap in sorrow the results of evil in order that he may learn wisdom and turn to good. It is for Christians to realise how it illuminates life and makes rational the burning hope of the Apostle that "*Christ be formed in you,*" a hope not possible for the best of men in a single life, and one ludicrously impossible and meaningless if set before the dejected mass of the slum-population, drink-sodden and sin-stained, yet far more sinned against than sinning.

Thus Reincarnation is a Christian doctrine, and if a Christian accepts it by the exercise of his reason and thought, and comes to the conclusion that Reincarnation is true, he ought not to take it as an alien doctrine, coming from the Hindu, Buddhist, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman religions, but should take it as part of his Christian birthright, as part of the faith once delivered to the saints.

Q. If Reincarnation is thus a Christian doctrine, why has it disappeared and has no place in modern Christianity?

Ans. Not a word of judgment, criticism or warning is found in the New Testament against this doctrine, which, as we saw before, formed a considerable portion of the philosophies and faiths of the Jews and the Gentiles. On the contrary, the Scriptures contain numerous passages that are illumined, and only rendered understandable, by the light shed upon them by the doctrine of Reincarnation. But that doctrine was condemned and ruled out of orthodox Christianity by the Second Council of

Constantinople in the sixth century (A.D. 553). That is the reason why the doctrine disappeared out of official Christianity represented by the Roman Catholic Church ; but it did not disappear from Christendom. It persisted and was preserved in the teaching of many a mystical—so-called heretical—sect and in the songs of many a wandering minstrel. The School of Albigenses, which gave so many martyrs through its clinging to the original truth of the Gospel, taught Reincarnation, and that doctrine appears from time to time in the Church in the most remarkable way. In the seventeenth century the Rev. Mr. Glanville, Chaplain of Charles II, was a man of unchallenged position in the Church ; and yet in his book, *Lux Orientalis*, he lays down step by step exactly the doctrine of Reincarnation that is found among the early Fathers and is familiar in the mouths of Theosophists to-day. In the eighteenth century also there was a regular outburst of this doctrine when several books were written, proving it to be an integral part of Christianity.

Thus though the teaching of reincarnation only disappeared for a time in the flood of ignorance that swept over Europe after the decay of the Roman Empire, this splendid conception is steadily coming back into western thought through books, lectures or articles by philosophers, poets and even clergymen in recent times.

Q. What are the principal factors which determine the next birth of a man ?

Ans. There are three principal factors :

The first is the Law of Evolution which presses the man into a position in which he can most easily develop the qualities he needs. Every man has to become perfect by unfolding all the divine possibilities latent in him, as the object of the entire scheme is this unfoldment. For

that purpose he is guided precisely to that race and sub-race which, with its surroundings and conditions, is best fitted to develop within him the special qualities in which he may be deficient.

But the action of this law is limited by the Law of Karma or the Law of Cause and Effect. If a man has made karma for himself, which brings about limitations, he may have to go without the best possible opportunities and rest content with the second best ones. In such a case one's own past actions restrain the free play of the *Law of Evolution*.

The third factor which still further limits the action of the *Law of Evolution* is the influence of the group of egos with whom he has formed strong ties of love or hate in former lives. His relation with those egos whom he must meet because of past connections is an important factor, acting for good or evil, in determining his next birth.

Evolution for man is God's will, and the *Law of Evolution* will give a man whatsoever is the most suitable, but, as said above, the best opportunities are limited by the man's past actions and his links with other souls. A man may be able to learn certain lessons in a hundred different positions ; but he may be debarred from more than half of them by his past karma ; and out of the balance a choice may be made mainly owing to the presence in a family, or in the neighbourhood, of souls with whom he had formed ties of love or hate in the past.

Of course it is philosophically true to say that a man always gets the best opportunities, because he obtains the conditions best suited to his imperfect character and necessary for the removal of his imperfections. It is just the same in schools, where we cannot give the best

text-book to a young student, because he could not understand or profit by it as it would be too advanced for him.

Q. Then do we again come into contact in a new life with the people we love or hate in this life ?

Ans. Certainly. First of all in the long heavenly life the whole of the time is spent with people we loved on earth ; and when we come back, we tend to do so in groups, along with the same loved ones.

Love is a link formed between egos, and death cannot break it ; and loving egos in new bodies recognise one another as friends wearing different suits of clothes. Still it does not follow that the egos will have the same earthly relationship as in the past life. The link of pure love remains, but the husband and wife of one life may be born as two brothers, or sisters, or as brother and sister, or may have the relationship of parent, or child, or grandparent, or grandchild, or of any such tie by blood. But if for reasons of karma they are born in different families in the same neighbourhood or even in far-away countries, they are brought together and drawn to each other as lovers or intimate friends, as nothing in heaven or earth can slay love, or break its tie.

Sometimes the links being those of hatred and wrong-doing, ancient enemies are drawn into one family, there to work out in misery, or sometimes in ghastly family tragedies, the evil results of the common past. From some people we shrink back at sight, and that is the warning of the ego against an ancient foe. The bond forged by hate can melt away only in the fire of love, as " Hatred ceases not by hatred at any time ; hatred ceases by love ". Thus back we come, old friends together—old enemies together, too—though dressed in new garbs, with new vehicles in each life.

In the eighteenth and last volume of the works of the late Max Müller, a noteworthy passage appears, distinctly stating his belief in reincarnation :

“ I cannot help thinking that the souls towards whom we feel drawn in this life are the very souls whom we knew and loved in a former life, and that the souls who repel us here, we do not know why, are the souls that earned our disapproval, the souls from whom we kept aloof in a former life.”

He is only one more witness in an ever-growing band, but each man of mark who adds his testimony increases the rationality of the doctrine in the eyes of the many who are swayed by the authority of well-known names.

The idea of instinctive dislike at first sight—the so-called Dr. Fell Policy—is well expressed in the following verse :

“ I do not like thee, Dr. Fell ;
The reason why I cannot tell ;
But this enough I know full well,
I do not like thee, Dr. Fell.”

Q. Please describe how the new mental, astral and physical vehicles are formed for a new life.

Ans. When physical death takes place, a man casts off his physical, astral and mental bodies one after another, as described in Chapter VI. Thus discarded, those bodies disintegrate, their particles mingling with the materials of their respective planes. But each man as a spiritual Triad—the triatomic Atma-Buddhi-Manas, the Jivātmā—has annexed to himself from the very beginning a lower triad of permanent atoms, an atom each of the physical and astral planes, and a molecule or unit of the lower mental plane, called physical permanent atom, astral permanent atom and mental permanent unit, respectively. These permanent atoms are carried over by a man from life to

life, are stored up, after the disintegration of the three lower bodies, as a brilliantly scintillating nucleus within his causal body, and are thus all that remains to him of his bodies in the lower worlds. They are really epitomes of the bodies which gather round them each life, and their use is to preserve within themselves, as vibratory powers, the results of all the experiences through which they have passed. Thus the astral and mental bodies hand on to the ego, or the real man, the germs of the qualities and faculties of that earth-life, which are then stored in the causal body as seeds for his future astral and mental bodies.

People sometimes wonder why the evil qualities which a man shows in one life should so often persist in later lives. The reason is not only that because the opposing good quality is undeveloped, there is an opportunity for evil influences to act upon the man in that particular direction, but also that the man carries with him from life to life the permanent atoms of his lower vehicles, and these tend to reproduce the qualities shown in his previous incarnations. Yet the carrying over of the permanent atoms is necessary if the developed man is to fulfil the purpose of human evolution and be master of *all* the planes. If it were conceivable that he could develop without those permanent atoms, he might possibly be a glorious archangel upon the higher planes, but he would be absolutely useless in these lower worlds, for he would have cut off from himself the power of feeling and thinking. The permanent atoms must therefore be purified and not dropped.

After his stay in the higher world is over, a thrill of life from the ego arouses the mental unit which acts as a magnet, drawing towards itself materials with

vibratory powers resembling, or accordant with, its own, to form a new mental body, representing the mental stage of the man with all his mental faculties.

After the mental body is partially formed, the life-thrill awakens or vivifies the astral atom to provide an astral body representing the desire-nature and reproducing the qualities evolved in the past.

Then the life-touch from the ego reaches the physical permanent atom, and the key-note of that atom is one of the forces which guide the selection of the materials of the future physical body, for none can be chosen that cannot, at least to some extent, be attuned to that atom. But it is only *one* of the forces; the karma of past lives, mental, emotional, and in relation to others, demands materials capable of the most varied expressions; out of that karma, certain mighty beneficent Intelligences, called Lipika or Lords of Karma, holding the threads of destiny for every man, choose such as is congruous, *i.e.*, such as can be expressed through a body of a particular material group; this congruous mass of karma determines the material group, overriding the permanent atom, and out of that group are chosen such materials as can vibrate in harmony with the permanent atom, or in discords not disruptive in their violence. Thus the Lords of Karma choose the race, the nation, the family, etc., and guide the reincarnating ego to the environments required in accordance with the three factors which determine reincarnation as described before.

The mould of the new physical body, suitable for the expression of the man's qualities and for working out the causes set going in the past, is given by those Great Ones, and the new etheric double, a copy of the mould, is

accordingly built in the mother's womb, while the dense body is built into that etheric double, molecule by molecule, physical heredity thus having full sway in the materials provided. Thoughts and passions of surrounding people, especially of the mother and father, influence the building of the bodies. The new astral body coming into contact with the etheric double exercises a great influence over its formation, and through it the mental body works upon the nervous organisation. This building of brain and nerves, and their correlation to the astral and mental bodies, go on till the seventh year when the connection between the real man and his physical vehicle is complete.

“ 'Tis but as when one layeth
His worn out robes away,
And, taking new ones, sayeth :
‘ These will I wear to-day.’
So putteth by the Spirit
Lightly its garb of flesh,
And passeth to inherit
A residence afresh.”

And this long life of his lasts until he attains that goal of Divinity which God means him to attain.

Q. But why are some persons born deformed, dwarf, crippled ?

Ans. The karma of cruelty inflicted on others in past lives results in deformed physical bodies. The inquisitors of old and the vivisectors of the present day, as well as schoolmasters ruling by fear instead of by love, terrorising the children and abusing the power put into their hands, are born in such bodies.

Evil thoughts and desires, hatred and passion, cause a deformed body in extreme cases, and in all cases result in a body deficient in strength or in

beauty and refinement. Nothing is outside the Law of Karma.

Q. Is not this fate horrible in the case of a person who has to be cruel for the ultimate good of others ?

Ans. Cruelty is the worst crime as it sins against the Law of Love. Good intentions are pleaded as excuse ; inquisitors wanted to save men's souls, and vivisectors pretend to save men's bodies, but surely there ought to be better methods of doing these. Similarly, the school-master ought to eradicate faults in children by love and good example, as weak children cruelly treated not only suffer physically at the time, but become cowardly and servile, and often cruel in their turn when they grow strong.

But the effect of really good intentions is not lost. As explained in Chapter V, each force works on its own plane. The good intention will react on the man's moral nature, and he will be born with a gentle and patient character ; though having inflicted pain on others on the physical plane, he must endure physical agony as a result, and that he does through his deformed physical body.

Cruelty, among its other horrible results, very often brings insanity in another life. On certain occasions it is found to bring a sort of repayment in kind, *i.e.*, a man who has been cruel, is himself put in a position, in another life, in which he suffers great cruelty. Often it has also resulted in a remarkable and cataclysmic descent in the social scale, and a person who had been cruel in a reasonably good position finds himself thrown down among the dregs of the populace because of that cruelty.

“ The fate of the cruel must fall also upon all who go out intentionally to kill God's creatures and call it

'sport'." The same thing is true with regard to certain articles of dress. There are certain kinds of feathers, certain kinds of decorations, that can only be procured at terrible cost to animal life—not only by the death of the creatures concerned, but generally also of the young ones depending on the mother for life. People who wear these things, though not desperately or intentionally cruel, are certainly criminally careless. They are simply doing what other people do, and "try to excuse their brutality by saying that it is the custom: but a crime does not cease to be a crime because many commit it," and the fate of the cruel will overtake all such sooner or later.

Q. Is it always the case that a child born of parents of a low type is entirely low, and that a highly developed child will be born of parents of a high stage of development?

Ans. Ordinarily like attracts like, and an ego is drawn to parents of similar development to get a physical body suited to his needs as well as to settle his accounts with the parents and relatives-to-be, with whom he very likely had dealings in past lives. But there are exceptions or abnormal cases. Sometimes among a degraded type of people in a slum we find a saintly child growing up like an unstained flower from the mire of slum-life, while sometimes again in a noble family we come across a 'black sheep'. These cases can be explained by the Law of Karma, in the link made with other egos in the past. The 'black sheep' by a kindly deed in a past life may have linked himself to the nobler ego, and is in his new life collecting the old debt from his late beneficiary in the form of advantages of good surroundings.

In some cases a great soul, moved by a spirit of self-sacrifice, may be born among people of a low type, simply to uplift the degraded and encourage them by his

example to rise to a higher level. Instances of this sort can be seen in some of the greatest Saints of Southern India born among the Pariahs and in the well-known negro Booker Washington.

Q. Is there a continuous series of incarnations in the same sex or can one, born as man in one incarnation, be born as woman in another ?

Ans. Men and women are complements rather than duplicates. There are important differences between the two sexes—social and biological.

Professor Edward Lee Thorndike, the famous educational psychologist of Columbia University, has classified the specific differences in the mentality of the sexes. Women, he says, excel in spelling, English, foreign languages, immediate memory and retentiveness. Men, he says, take the forefront in history, ingenuity, physics, chemistry and accuracy of movement.

According to physiology the feminine body has a much larger development of the glandular system, while in the man there is a much greater development of the muscular system. Emotional development going with the glandular system, which nourishes, such development is consequently found greater in the glandular system of woman than in the corresponding system in man. These fundamental physiological differences between man and woman are necessary in order that the qualities corresponding to these might be developed in the Race. "For fathers men were created, as for mothers women," said the Manu. That is the mark of difference which governs the body of each—Motherhood and Fatherhood—causing the fundamental difference of type ; the woman is the nourisher, the protector, the helper ; these are the special qualities of the Mother—tender, gentle, patient and enduring—so

that even if we take the masculine quality, the quality of courage, woman's courage is very different from the courage of man. The courage of a man is the great impulse of his nature to assert himself as against opposition. The courage of woman springs from love or devotion, and she will be as brave as, braver sometimes than, the bravest man ; but it will be in defence of some one, some thing that she loves, and not with the mere desire of rivalry against an opponent. That runs all through, though at a later stage in evolution those qualities of the two sexes will blend.

It is quite true that sometimes we find some of the opposite qualities developed in each sex, *i.e.*, in the noblest man much compassion and in the noblest woman great strength and courage. But it is a blending of the opposites, in order that the perfect human being, in whom all the qualities are developed, may gradually appear on our earth. Still no premature attempt to force that perfection is desirable, as we have not yet reached the perfection of separate qualities. That awaits further evolution. Hence the great modern mistake of trying to make women into *men*, to carry them along exactly the same lines, to forget the difference and the value of the difference. The masculine woman who has "lost sex" is no more attractive than the effeminate man.

Incarnations are taken by the ego to acquire all good qualities and to develop all faculties, thus becoming perfect in the end ; and different egos requiring different kinds of experiences have to be born among different races, countries, religions and families.

The ego is sexless, and sex is a characteristic of the form, of the vehicle only ; but, as stated before, at this stage of human progress we ordinarily find strength, courage, firmness, etc., evolved along the male line, and

tenderness, purity, endurance, etc., evolved along the female line, and therefore each ego has to dwell in male and female bodies to acquire the qualities lacking at any stage. Again, the infliction of wrong by one sex on another may, as a kârmic result, draw back the wrong-doers into the wronged sex to suffer for their sins of past life.

As a general rule an ordinary ego takes no less than three and not more than seven successive incarnations in one sex before changing to the other, but in the case of a developed ego considerable elasticity is allowed, and he is likely to be born into the sex and race best suited to give him an opportunity to strengthen the weak points of his character.

Q. If a man is born in a body suited to the actions of his past life and has to suffer or enjoy therein, have very sinful people to be born in bodies of animals as many Hindus are said to believe?

Ans. Indian Sages have taught three distinct phases in the process of rebirth: Resurrection, Transmigration or Metempsychosis, and Reincarnation.

As explained before, our body is a kind of colony of atoms and molecules, microbes and bacteria, each having a life of its own. We are all the time emanating millions of lives which are drawn into different kingdoms of nature according to the tendency we have given them, while at death these life-atoms in the body are scattered all over the earth and are directed to new organisms of similar tendencies. The doctrine of resurrection is thus true only for atoms and emanations sent out by man during the course of his life and at death.

The kâmic elements of a man persisting as a shade or a shell for some time after his death are finally disintegrated in the astral world. They are then, according

to the law of attraction and repulsion which controls universal selection, drawn into the kâmic elements of animals and men of inferior type. "A drunken priest becomes a worm, a stealer of corn a rat" means that the elements which had served as the basis for passions in a man pass after his death into the bodies of animals possessing similar passions.

But a man, it is argued, may be born as an animal to suffer for the horrible crimes of his past life. Those who argue in this way forget that there is very little suffering in a mere animal body. Thus suppose that he is born as a tiger. That tiger, according to his nature, would prey upon weaker animals and would lead a life of comparative ease up to his death, probably even dying painlessly by being shot in the end. But if the same soul were compelled to be reborn as a man, would he not suffer more for his sins of past life if, for example, he had to lose all his patrimony and remain unemployed, and then to see his child die of slow starvation before his very eyes, his wife thereby committing suicide and he himself turning a maniac?

A divine spark constituting the soul by individualisation must find an adequate expression of its divine nature, and having once risen from the animal stage to that of man it would be as impossible for a human spirit to dwell in an animal body as it would be for a gallon to be contained in a pint measure.

Still when an ego, a human soul, by vicious appetites forms a strong link of attachment to a particular type of animal, the astral body of such a person, after the soul has left the physical body, may assume a form resembling that of the animal which represented his passions on earth, and the soul may thus be embodied in that animal vesture. Either at this stage or when he is

returning to reincarnation and is again in the astral world, the soul may, in extreme cases, be linked by magnetic affinity to the astral body of an animal of similar vicious appetites and be chained as a prisoner to that animal's physical body through its astral. He cannot go to heaven if so chained in the astral world just after death, nor can he be reborn as a man if the chaining takes place while the soul is descending towards physical life. That human entity has all his faculties and consciousness in the astral world, but cannot express himself, because in the first place the animal body is not suited for human self-expression, and secondly because the animal still controls its own body. But such animal obsession, *i.e.*, undergoing penal servitude while chained to an animal, and cut off for the time from progress and self-expression, is not reincarnation, for reincarnation means entering into a physical vehicle which belongs to and is controlled by the ego. Thus we understand that the soul of a man does not become the soul of a brute, but that the former is bound to the soul of a brute and carried in the animal organisation with all the energies of that rational soul absolutely impeded.

In minor cases short of absolute imprisonment the ego may take human birth, but the physical body will be impressed with the animal characteristics like pig-face or dog-face.

Q. Then how do you account for the statement in 'The Light of Asia' that Buddha was able to remember His incarnation in a tiger's form?

Ans. To account for this, we require neither the birth of human souls in animal bodies nor the theory of a persistent individual consciousness in animals.

First of all that statement is merely a repetition of an exoteric legend and may or may not be correct.

Even taking it as correct, we are to remember that Adepts can trace Their past incarnations right back to the beginning when They became men, and Buddha is a Being whose powers are far higher than those of Adepts; and He could look back and read the Ākāshic records of a previous Manvantara when, out of the Monadic essence that was then evolving through the tiger's form, the human being that was later to develop to a Buddha was individualised, *i.e.*, when that Monadic essence which is now Himself was part of a block of such essence ensouling the bodies of many tigers.

Q. At what stage does reincarnation finish for an ego and how?

Ans. The ego has to descend to lower worlds and work there garbed in different vehicles till he attains the goal appointed for him by the Law of Evolution, by acquiring knowledge and purity enough to be able to function self-consciously on the five planes of nature up to Nirvāna, with full mastery of matter therein.

What draws him back to earth is first his Karma, and secondly 'Trishnā,' (in Pāli, 'Tanhā,') thirst, desire for sentient existence on the physical plane. Desire is useful so long as experience is lacking, and its thirst remaining unslaked, the ego returns to earth again and again. But desire is personal and therefore selfish, and the condition of Arhatship being unceasing activity without any personal reward, the ego in the upward climbing must free himself from one desire after another, desire for personal enjoyment, personal pleasure, personal gain or attainments, and, last and subtlest of all, desire for personal perfection. Action is not to be stopped, but activity being carried on, reward for the fruit of action is not to be desired. Thus wearing out of all karma and killing out of desire for all

sentient existence are necessary for liberation from the bond of birth and death. But desire cannot be killed out till knowledge is acquired, and so liberation cannot be had without knowledge. In fact, liberation is not a thing to be acquired; we are all free, but in order to know, to realise that we are free and not bound, self-knowledge is necessary, and we find in *The Voice of the Silence*: "Shalt thou abstain from action? Not so shall gain thy soul her freedom. To reach Nirvāna one must reach Self-Knowledge, and Self-Knowledge is of loving deeds the child."

Again in the same book we read: "Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin." The failure to realise this distinction between action and the desire for the fruits of action has led to the stagnation and passivity characteristic of the eastern nations, since spiritual selfishness and indifference brought on their decay.

Q. What is the interval between lives, the time that elapses between two incarnations of the same individual?

Ans. The period between incarnations, *i.e.*, between death and the next physical birth, is largely spent in the lower heaven-world—Devachan—and the length of life there depends on the amount and intensity of aspiration during the earthly life. That period varies widely in length with different persons.

Three principal facts have to be taken into account: 1. The class to which an ego belongs, that class depending on the time when that ego attained individualisation, that is, passed from the animal to the human stage. 2. The mode in which he has individualised, either by any of the right ways or normal lines, *i.e.*, of intelligence, will and emotion, or by wrong ways or irregular methods, *i.e.*,

of pride, fear or hatred, and intense desire for power over others. 3. The length and nature of his last life.

The whole can be well understood by taking instances of different classes of egos.

1. Those who are already on the Path and are about to reach the goal of liberation ordinarily take a continuous succession of incarnations ; being disciples of the Masters of the Wisdom, they are eager to continue the work on the physical plane for their Masters, and so renounce the happiness of the heaven-world that is their due, in order to serve mankind with their work. Their Masters choose for them when and where they shall be born, and usually, after death, they reincarnate within a few months or years, not discarding their astral and mental bodies before rebirth, as is normally the case, and taking only new physical bodies. But if for some reason these developed souls do not follow that course, their interval between lives is from fifteen hundred to two thousand years or more. Their stay on the astral is very short or rapid and unconscious, the greater portion of the interval being spent on the highest level of the lower mental plane or heaven-world, and about one-tenth of that interval being passed by the ego on his own plane as conscious life in the causal body in the higher mental world.

2. For those who are approaching the Path, the interval is about twelve hundred years if the ego has been individualised slowly by intellectual development, and about seven hundred years if he has been individualised suddenly by a rush of emotion or by a stupendous effort of will. They spend on an average about five years on the astral plane and the rest in the heaven-world, excepting about fifty years in the causal body on the higher mental plane.

Persons distinguished along artistic, scientific or religious lines have the same interval, with a tendency to a longer astral and a shorter causal life.

3. A large class of people, gentlemen with a keen sense of honour and above the average in goodness, intellect and religious feelings, including, for example, the best types of professional men, city-merchants and country-gentlemen, and others who are well developed and altruistic, has an interval from six hundred to one thousand years including twenty or twenty-five years spent on the astral, the balance being spent in various stages of the *heaven-world with only a touch of consciousness in the ego on his own plane.*

4. Another class, like most city-merchants, gentlemen still, a little below the average in goodness, intellect and religious feelings, who turn their intellect to more material ends and have a life less elevated than the professional man, has an interval between lives of five hundred years, twenty-five in the astral and the rest in the heaven-world. They have no conscious life in the causal body, though they have the flash of memory vouchsafed to each ego when he touches his own plane between two physical incarnations.

5. The great mass of the lower middle class, of the type of small shopkeepers, shop assistants or farmers, conventional, dull and narrow, though well-intentioned, has an average interval of two hundred to three hundred years with forty years on the astral and the rest spent on the lower levels of Devachan.

6. The so-called working classes, the skilled labourers working both with hands and heads, men of respectability and good character, have an interval varying from one hundred to two hundred years, of which about forty are

spent on the middle level of the astral and the rest on the lower subplanes of the heaven-world.

7. The vast mass of unskilled labour, well meaning but careless, and also the high types of savages have an interval from sixty to a hundred years, whereof forty to fifty are spent on the lower part of the astral and the remainder on the lowest subdivision of the heaven-world.

8. Savages of comparatively mild type, some hill tribes of India, and also the wastrels, the unemployable and the drunkards among all nations, as well as slum-dwellers, are absent from the world from forty to fifty years, spent entirely on the lowest subdivision but one of the astral plane.

9. The lowest specimens of humanity, the most brutal of savages, the habitual criminals and the wife-and child-beaters spend about five years on the lowest subplane of the astral before being reborn, unless they are earth-bound by crime, which not infrequently happens.

In all the above cases those individualised by intellect tend to take the longer of the two intervals mentioned as possible for them, while those who attained individualisation by other modes tend to take the shorter interval.

When a child dies, he, too, has his short astral life and his Devachan before return to rebirth; the interval between the two lives may vary from a few months to several years, according to the age and the mental and emotional nature of the child.

But the length and nature of the last life are also a great factor in determining the interval. An ego dying young, not having an opportunity to generate great spiritual force will have a shorter interval than an ego living to old age, and will also have a greater proportion of astral

life, because most of the strong emotions are generated in the earlier part of the physical existence, while the more spiritual energy is ordinarily generated during the later part and continues to be so generated up to the end of that earth-life. The character of the man during his earth-life also greatly influences the interval, as some men lead a long life without much of spirituality in it, thus naturally tending to shorten the interval between their incarnations.

Again, egos are closely associated in groups or families, and this association tends to equalise the intervals between lives as they have to be brought into incarnation together, thus involving an increase or decrease of the rate at which the spiritual force in individual cases discharges itself. But there is no injustice anywhere—each one reaps exactly as he has sown.

Q. You speak of the Law of Karma, but are there not two other explanations or theories of human destiny—one, the Will of God, and the other, the Result of Chance ?

Ans. Of course, one theory is that destiny is the Will of God, that at His command things are bestowed or are withheld, that we are like puppets moved by His hand and no exertion can change our destiny. But a consistent application of this theory means that God blinds children and breaks the hearts of strong men, permits the innocent to suffer for the guilty and creates a world with souls born as cripples or idiots or congenitally diseased for no fault of theirs. And for what purpose? We know not why we come into the world and whither we tend, treated unjustly so long as we stay here. But this theory of human destiny shows God to be unjust and capricious.

Again, if destiny be the result of chance, life is merely a hotchpotch of circumstances. If there be God, He does not concern Himself with the world He has created. Human bodies might be born through parents swayed by passion in a hovel, or in the home of refined persons, without a law governing birth, without any choice on our part or justification of the conditions or environments, everything being the result of chance. Then we can never be certain of results; we might toil for years, and after all might fail by chance. Science is possible because nature is organised by law. Why should there be law and order in all things in the universe except in human events and human existence ?

Q. Then what is the third explanation of destiny, this Law of Karma ?

Ans. Karma literally means Action. Every action has a past which leads up to it as well as a future proceeding from it. An action implies a desire which prompted it,

and a thought which shaped it, as well as the visible movement called the 'Act'. A desire stimulates a thought, and the latter embodies itself in an act, while sometimes it is a thought, in the form of a memory, that arouses a desire, and the desire bursts into an act. Every cause was once an effect, and each effect in turn becomes a cause. An action is the outer form of an invisible thought and desire, and in its very accomplishment gives birth to a fresh thought and desire, the three forming a circle perpetually retraced. The relation of these three as 'Action', and the endless interlinkings of such actions as causes and effects are all included in the word Karma, a recognised succession in nature, *i.e.*, a law. Hence Karma is called the Law of Causation or the Law of Cause and Effect.

The Law of Karma is the Law of Cause and Effect, of force and the effects produced by it. This force is of the physical world of movement, or of the astral world of feeling, or of the mental world of thinking. Each man is using all three types of force, the first with the activities of his physical body, the second with the feelings of his astral body, and the third with the concrete and abstract thoughts of his mental and causal bodies. To aspire, to dream, to plan, to think, to feel, to act—all this means to set in motion forces of three worlds, and according to the use made by him of these forces, he does good or evil karma—he helps or hinders others. Since he is one unit in a humanity of millions of individuals and not an individual by himself, each thought or feeling or act of his affects each of his fellow-men, in proportion to the nearness of each to him as the distributor of force. Each such use of force by him, which helps or hinders the whole, of which he is a part, brings with it a result to him, a resultant reaction of his

action to others. In the physical world, an injury inflicted by him on others will bring the reaction of pain, while the karma or reaction of a kind act is a force which adjusts material circumstances so as to produce a comfort; in the astral world, dislikes will react as griefs, while sympathies will bring happiness; in the lower mental world, criticism of others will work itself out in worries to him, while search for truth will produce inspirations; and in the higher mental world, aspirations will give ideals to be followed life after life.

But first it should be understood that the Law of Karma is a natural law and not an artificial one laid down by an external authority. An artificial law has penalties attached to it, which are local, changeable and escapable. A thief may escape detection altogether or may get light or heavy punishment if caught. But a natural law is not a command like an artificial law; it is a simple statement of successions or sequences. That 'fire burns,' that 'if you put your hand into fire, it will burn,' is the statement of a natural law. It is not a command not to put your hand into fire, nor does it lay down a penalty for its breach, but lays down an invariable sequence of conditions—such a condition being present, such another condition will invariably follow; and the sequences never vary. The first condition is called the cause, the second the effect. But if a new condition is introduced, the succeeding condition will be altered, the effect now being the resultant of both. It has nothing of the nature of command; it leaves us free to choose, but points out that such and such thing will inevitably happen as the sequence of our choice, and whatever the condition we choose, we must accept with it the inevitable sequence. Wanting to

produce water by the union of oxygen and hydrogen, we require a certain temperature which we can obtain from the electric spark. If we insist on keeping the temperature at zero, or substitute nitrogen for hydrogen, we cannot have water. Nature does not supply or withhold water, but merely lays down conditions for its production. We are free to have it or go without it. If we want it, we must bring the things together and thus make the conditions. Without those conditions, no water is formed; with those conditions, inevitably water is produced. Are we bound or free? Free as to making the conditions, bound as to results when we have made them.

It is an invariable law, and invariability of law does not bind—it frees. Science proves that knowledge *is the condition of freedom and that only as a man knows can he compel—nature is conquered by obedience.* The scientific statement of this law is: “Action and reaction are equal and opposite.”

Its religious version cannot be better put than in the well-known verse of a Christian Scripture: “Be not deceived; God is not mocked; *whatsoever* a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap.” Let us add also: *Whatsoever* a man reaps, *that* he has sown in the past.

In the fine matter of the higher worlds the reaction is by no means instantaneous, often spreading over long periods of time, but it returns inevitably and exactly.

“ Though the mills of God grind slowly,
 Yet they grind exceeding small;
 Though with patience stands He waiting,
 With exactness grinds He all.

“ It knows not wrath nor pardon; utter true
 Its measures mete, its faultless balance weighs;
 Times are as nought, to-morrow it will judge,
 Or after many days.”

Q. When did karma begin ?

Ans. The question shows a misconception of the very nature of karma. A general law of nature cannot be said to have either a beginning or an ending. Wherever there is any manifestation, any universe, any world, there general laws are also present, inherent in the very nature of things. Hence karma, being a general law, is eternal ; it is a perpetual condition of existence in matter, neither beginning nor ending. Where there is matter, eternity can only reflect itself as endless succession, and hence matter is said to be the "cause of the generation of causes and effects".

If the form of the question be modified and it be asked : "*When did the karma of a particular creature begin ?*", then the answer is : "*At the time the particular creature came into existence.*" When the eternal Spirit takes to himself a garment of matter, he steps into conditions in which karma is perpetually working. His stepping into the conditions begins his particular karma. At first it is the karma of the mineral, *i.e.*, the play upon him of surrounding force and matter, and the reaction from him on his surroundings. These actions and reactions weave the links of his karma, and the chain draws him into one or another type of the vegetable kingdom. There his reaction is more complex, and the complicated web of karma ultimately lifts him into some animal type. In that kingdom his increasing sentiency enters into kârmic causes, and pains inflicted by him react as pains on him. The feeling of pain is due to the evolution in him of the power to feel ; the law is the same, it is still action and reaction, but whereas in the mineral these were unaccompanied by feeling, in the animal feeling results in pleasure and pain. With the development of reason another strand is added

to the kârmic web, and the action in the thought-world is added to that in the acting and feeling worlds. Hence though a powerful factor is added to the reaction, the law is working on the same lines.

Applying this law in the realms of mind and morals, man shapes his future and becomes master of his destiny.

Q. How does a man become master of his own destiny ?

Ans. There are three subsidiary laws under the general Law of Karma, and a knowledge of the method of their application is necessary to shape one's future. The three threads of the cord of fate are :

1. Thought builds character.
2. Desire makes opportunities and attracts objects.
3. Action makes environments.

Q. Taking the first thread of the cord of fate, how does thought build character ?

Ans. Character in man is the totality of his mental and moral qualities. Man means 'Thinker,' and the connection of thought and character is recognised in the Scriptures of all nations. An Indian Scripture declares: "Man is created by thought; as a man thinks, so he becomes"; while in the Bible we read: "As a man thinks, so is he"; and again: "He that looketh upon a woman to lust after her, *hath committed adultery* already with her in his heart"; and "He that hateth his brother *is* a murderer". The *rationale* of these facts is that when the mind dwells on a particular thought, a definite rate of vibration in matter is set up, and the oftener this vibration is caused, the more does it tend to repeat itself in the matter of the mental body automatically till it becomes a habit, as explained in Chapter VII.

To create a habit of thought a man should choose a desirable quality—a virtue, an emotion—and then think

persistently on the chosen quality. He should think deliberately of it every morning for a few minutes and persist in that thought-creation until a strong habit is formed and the virtue is built into his very nature—which is the case especially when he acts out the thought in daily life. Everything being under law, he cannot obtain mental abilities or moral virtues by sitting still, but can build his mental and moral nature by thinking strenuously and acting accordingly. His aspirations become his capacities, his repeated thoughts his tendencies and habits. In the past he made his character with which he was born in this life, and he is now making the character with which he will die and with which he will be reborn ; and character is the most important part of karma. (See “ How to build character ” in Chapter VIII.)

If a man is clever in a certain direction, it is because in a previous life he has devoted much effort in that direction. Genius and precocity are thus satisfactorily explained. High aspirations in one life result in capacities in a future life, while the strong will for unselfish service results in spirituality.

Q. Now how does desire make opportunities and attract objects ?

Ans. Will is the energy of the Self, an interior concentration, prompting to action. When that energy is drawn out by pleasure-giving or pain-giving outside objects, it is called desire—desire to possess, which is love or attraction ; desire to repel, which is hate, or repulsion. Between the desire and the desired object there is a magnetic tie, and our desire draws to us what we wish to possess as the magnet attracts and holds soft iron. There may be obstacles or difficulties, but inevitably that desire will be accomplished, sometimes even in the same life,

sometimes in after-lives. Occasionally a man is found to be fortunate or lucky, and everything he touches turns to gold. But if that man's past be known and studied, it will be found that he had a great desire for wealth; that he followed it steadily; that he strove for it, worked for it, sometimes sinned for it, and that desire has to be accomplished, and therefore he becomes a man who seems so fortunate that others envy him. Desire brings him opportunity. A man strongly desiring to visit a country will probably find an opportunity to do so at some time of his life. Desire draws one towards the place where the object of desire is obtainable and is thus one of the causes that determine the place of one's rebirth. Thus desire draws together the desirer and the desired, or makes opportunities and attracts objects.

Hence we should be careful of what we desire and should test the value of the object of desire; for inevitably it will come to us later, and it may prove a desire that is as ashes in the mouth. Many a man has desired wealth and gained it, and then found it a burden instead of a joy. Many a man has grasped some object of desire, and has found it pain-giving instead of pleasure-giving. We should therefore measure our desires, try to see in what they will result and weigh the value of the desired object. Then gradually we will learn naturally to desire the things that are righteous and pure, good and uplifting. With every one this careful watch over the desire-nature is necessary, for only when the desires go in harmony with the Divine Will can they prove sources of happiness when they are gratified, and not sources of pain.

Q. How does action give us our physical environments?

Ans. The third thread of our cord of destiny appears on the physical plane as action, and is the least important

of them all as it only slightly affects the Inner Man directly. Actions are effects of our past thinking and desires, and their karma is for the most part exhausted in their happening, though they affect us indirectly by giving rise to fresh thoughts and desires. The spinning of this thread brings into our destiny outward happiness or outward misery. As a man has made people physically happy or physically miserable, so will he reap kârmically from his action favourable or unfavourable physical circumstances, conducive to physical happiness or physical suffering. His nearest circumstance, the expression of his past activity, is his physical body, and this is shaped for him according to the mould of the etheric double, as explained before. Wisdom in the present life is the result of experiences in past lives, while conscience is similarly built of painful experiences in the past.

Thus the reaction of our thoughts on ourselves is the building of character and of faculties ; the reaction of desires on ourselves is the gaining of opportunities, of objects and of power, making us ' lucky ' or ' unlucky ' as the case may be ; the reaction of our activities on ourselves is our environment, the conditions and circumstances, the friends and enemies that surround us. Two parts of our karma we bring with us, our thought-nature and desire-nature ; the third part we are born into, our environment, including our physical body.

We are what we are because of our past thoughts, desires and actions, there being no favouritism in Nature. With this idea properly grasped, envy and resentment become impossible, and we cease the useless swearing at fate. We reap in this life as we sowed in the past ; as we are now sowing, so shall we reap in the future ; and as we are now spinning, so shall our cord of fate be for future

life. Thus man is the creator of his future, moulder and master of his own destiny.

“ Who toiled a slave may come anew a prince,
For gentle worthiness and merit won ;
Who ruled a king may wander earth in rags
For things done and undone.”

“ That which ye sow ye reap. See yonder fields !
The sesamum was sesamum, the corn
Was corn. The Silence and the Darkness knew,
So is a man's fate born.”

“ The pepper plant will not give birth to roses nor
the sweet jessamine's silver star to thorn or thistle turn.”
“ Thou canst create this day thy chances for thy morrow.”
“ Act thou for them to-day, and they will act for thee
to-morrow.”

“ Look ; the clay dries into iron,
But the potter moulds the clay ;
Destiny to-day is master,
Man was master yesterday.”

Q. But does not this conception of destiny controlled by the Law of Karma eliminate God from the world ?

Ans. No. On the contrary our idea of God becomes grander than before, because instead of believing Him a bad architect who has built the world badly, so as to require constant interference to set things straight, we see in Him the Perfect Architect of the Universe, guiding that universe by exquisitely balanced natural and moral laws, perfect in their working even to the minutest detail. Transgression of these laws brings misery ; obedience to them confers happiness.

The Laws of Nature are only the most material expressions of the Divine Mind, of the Divine Will, and they are like rocks. Man goes and bruises himself against them. If he will not learn in any other way, if he will not learn by precept and example, then he must learn that

way—by the hard facts of the Laws of Nature—though it means suffering and evil. That is what Shri Krishna means when He says: “I am the gambling of the cheat.” That man, the cheat, has something to learn from his cheating, and it is the only way in which that poor soul can learn it. He induces evil by his stupidity and wrong-headedness, but that is all within the Divine Knowledge, all that is part of Him. His mind, although he is misusing it, is yet part of the Divine Mind; and although he is doing wrong, yet, out of the wrong which he does, good for him will come, because he will learn by that, and by failure he will learn to step on to the right path. It is, as it were, a last resort, but it is a resort and therefore within the Divine Plan. The man had both precept and example, and had he chosen, he would have avoided all evil and suffering. He would not take it and he must evolve. Therefore, if there is no other way in which he will learn, then under the Divine Laws he learns by the evil that he does and the suffering that follows upon that evil. Thus there is a sense in which everything absolutely is God.

Q. What is sin?

Ans. Sin is popularly supposed to indicate a defiance of the Divine Law—the performance of some action which the actor knows to be wrong. But in almost every case man breaks the law through ignorance, heedlessness or lack of experience, and not of deliberate intention. When once a man really *knows* the Divine Intention, he inevitably comes into harmony with it, for two reasons: at an earlier stage, because he sees the utter futility of doing otherwise; and later because, seeing the glory and beauty of the design, he cannot but throw himself into its execution with all the powers of his heart and soul.

But it may be objected that in daily life we constantly see people doing what they must know to be wrong ; but this is a misstatement—or at least a misunderstanding—of the case. They are doing what they have been *told* is wrong, which is quite a different matter. If a man really *knows* that an action is wrong, and that it will inevitably be followed by evil consequences, he is careful to avoid it. A man really *knows* that fire will burn him ; therefore he does not put his hand into it. He has been *told* that the fire of hell will burn him as the result of a certain action, but he does not really *know* this, and therefore when he feels the inclination—or is tempted—to do the action, he does so in spite of the threatened consequences. It will also be found that every one who does wrong justifies the wrong action to himself at the time of its commission—thus proving want of real knowledge—whatever he may think about it afterwards in cooler moments. Even in those who, for once, know an action to be sinful, lack of experience is still there, for the sorrow that follows on sin has not yet made a sufficiently deep impression, and always, until that impression is made, the man will ignorantly go aside from righteousness.

So sin is not a perversity to be met with punishment and savage persecution, but is the result of an unfortunate condition of ignorance or lack of experience, which can only be dealt with by enlightenment and education. Of course, by the selfish action called sin a man sets in motion certain causes which will bring him unavoidable results by the educative, and not punitive, Law of Karma—the Law of Cause and Effect.

Q. Is there any forgiveness of sins ?

Ans. Forgiveness of sins posits retaliation in some form. The conception of punishment for sins belongs to

a degraded idea of God as a limited Deity raised above men by superior power, but of like passions with the men He rules.

Our progress through evolution consists in the gaining of wisdom under the Laws of Reincarnation and Karma, and a child learning to walk may well be supposed to be punished by its falls just as a man is supposed to be punished for his sins when he reaps the results of his ignorance and mistakes.

Moreover, we do not expect Laws of Nature to forget or forgive an infringement, and karma is a law of the Divine Nature, in which there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. If a man flings himself against a wall, he will bruise himself ; law is like a wall, and doing wrong is flinging oneself against the wall. Repenting does not cure past bruises.

The Divine Law operates as invariably in the mental and moral worlds as in the physical. A man falling into a fire will burn his body, and neither prayer nor repentance can save him from the pain. He will not even dream of asking the law of gravity for forgiveness if he infringes it ; why then should he expect forgiveness if he has infringed mental or moral laws ? The false teaching that a man can do wrong and be forgiven, *i.e.*, escape the consequences of his wrong-doing, is very demoralising.

Karma is not a punishment for sin, but the unavoidable result of the causes set in motion, and sorrow is ever the plant that springs from the seed of sin. After sowing evil seeds our salvation lies not in asking for forgiveness, but in trying to make amends and doing better thereafter.

Again, karma is the readjustment of harmony in the universe, broken by a selfish action called sin ; and the method of adjustment being that the Law of Love shall

rule all in all, to ask for forgiveness is to ask that harmony might not be restored. In a world of law, there can be no punishment for sin, *i.e.*, no arbitrary penalty, inflicted in anger and not sequentially related to the sin. Therefore to suppose that a man could burn in hell because he had not believed in some particular dogma, or that the wickedness of a finite lifetime, however persistent, can merit the torments of an eternal hell, is to do violence, not only to our sense of justice, but even to our ordinary common-sense. But the good Law is educative, and it is reasonable to suppose that if a man, rolling in wealth and living in luxury, is totally unsympathetic or indifferent to the urgent needs of those connected with or around him, he will be given a chance of learning sympathy and righting the wrong done, in a future life, and of thus restoring harmony in the universe, by himself being born a pauper next life and understanding the hardships of poverty from personal experience. The Law of Karma "knows not wrath nor pardon," otherwise it would no longer be absolutely just and absolutely inviolable and could not be trusted.

Thus there can be no interfering with the due operation of the Law, no arbitrary letting off as is ordinarily implied in forgiveness. But the word "forgiveness" is sometimes used in the Christian Scripture in the sense of deliverance from spiritual darkness and consequent "rightness with God". In the selfish action called sin the will and desire of the lower nature of the man are set in opposition to the Divine Will—the Divine Law—and that opposition may be quite suddenly removed by some appeal from the outside, through a spiritual teacher or somebody dearly loved, or a subtle change in the very heart of the man, brought about sometimes by sheer satiety. The spiritual darkness being thus suddenly dispelled, the human will,

which has been persistently directed against the will of God, may turn round and be transformed almost in a moment. Thus in the Gospel when the Lord Christ uses the words: "Thy sins are forgiven thee ; go in peace " or "Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much ", the word "forgiveness" implies something quite different from the mere release from punishment and is meant to describe the sense of rightness which comes with such an experience, as can be distinctly seen in numerous passages in the *New Testament* where it is said in so many words that one truly "forgiven" *can* sin no more.

But even with this forgiveness, this sense of rightness, with the will of the sinner redeemed, the effects of his previous sins are not blotted out ; that which he has already sown, he will have to reap, though he will sow evil seed no more. He is free and forgiven, because he has rightly resolved and is now working with the Divine Will and not against it. Similarly, in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Lord Krishna, speaking of a man who has turned from seeking the gratification of the lower self and lifted his eyes to the God within and around him, says that such a man, though of evil life, may be at once counted amidst the good—"he hath the right way chosen, he shall grow righteous ere long." But, again, it may happen that when the sinner has chosen the right way and also when the outer reaction of evil is worn out, someone with higher knowledge seeing the chain of cause and effect, may declare the suffering ended, as was done by the Christ with the glad words of liberation : "Take up thy bed and walk."

Q. Does repentance of sins do any good ?

Ans. A man should not be carried away by delusions about remorse and repentance. If he thinks over a

fault, he creates a thought-form of that fault; the more sorry he feels, the more often he turns the matter over in his mind, the stronger the thought-form grows. "What you think upon, that you become," and therefore by brooding over a fault within himself, he simply strengthens it. So when he has strayed away from the right path, instead of giving himself to repentance and remorse, he should say: "Well, that is a foolish thing to do; I will never do it again." He should remember what Talleyrand said: "Any man may make a mistake; we all make mistakes; but the man who makes the same mistake twice is a fool."

Thus the idea of remorse, of repenting one's sins, is a delusion. It is a waste of time and energy, and none should let himself be carried away by it. He should put it behind him and go on from where he may be, making up his mind not to make the same mistake again. This is very strongly put in *The Voice of the Silence*: "Look not behind or thou art lost." A Master once said: "The only repentance which is worth anything is the resolve not to do it again."

Of course, this does not imply that he will escape the consequences of his evil karma already done. He has sown evil seed and must reap its evil harvest. But his repentance is a new cause, as it sets him against his sin; it is a force to undo the deterioration of character which is the worst result of the wrong-doing. And his turning away from the sin, towards God, is like turning his face away from a wall, towards the sun; the sunlight warms and cheers him, and this warming and cheering of the heart is what the repentant sinner feels and calls "forgiveness". He can then gladly accept the suffering which follows his sin. Thus the only good of real

repentance, *i.e.*, the resolve not to do it again, is that in future he will be proof against temptations of the same kind and hence will not be liable to *further* consequences or evil effects.

Q. Then can karma be transferred from one person to another? Does not transferability of karma underlie the Christian doctrine of vicarious atonement?

Ans. As already explained, punishment of sins has no place under the Law of Karma. Moreover, vicarious atonement is grossly misunderstood. In the early Church the teaching on the Atonement was, that Christ, as the Representative of humanity, fought and conquered Satan who had held humanity in bondage, and set his captive free. The Christian teachers lost touch with spiritual truths and began to preach that Christ suffered the wrath of God for man's sins.

The Law of Sacrifice underlies all systems; it lies at the root of evolution, and universes are built on it. In the doctrine of the Atonement it takes a concrete form in connection with men who have reached a certain stage in spiritual development when they realise their oneness with all mankind. When it is said that Christ suffers for men, His purity replacing their sin, His wisdom their ignorance, it means that He so becomes one with them that they share with Him and He with them. There is no substitution of Him for them, but the taking of their lives into His and the pouring of His life into theirs; for having risen to the plane of unity He is able to share all He has gained. His at-one-ment with His brethren is not by a vicarious substitution, but by identity of nature, by the unity of a common life. He is sinful in them, and His purity purges them; in them is He the Man of Sorrow. Thus identity of nature was mistaken for a personal substitution, and

from that doctrine narrowly seen grew the idea of vicarious atonement as a legal transaction between man and God where the Christ took the place of the sinner.

A man's karma is his personal identity, what he has made himself, and none can eat his food for him, or live his life for him, or bear his karma for him, without annihilating him. A man can certainly help another to bear his own karma, but cannot take from him his appointed means of advance by manly endurance. Thus vicarious atonement setting a premium on a man's laziness and committal of sins is unreasonable and unmoral.

Q. But if all be the working out of law and a compelling force, are we not helpless slaves of destiny? Is not karma a doctrine of fatalism?

Ans. Fatalism implies that we are so bound by circumstances that no effort of our own can free us. "Ignorance of nature is the source of all suffering, and there is no ignorance so fatal, so disastrous, as knowledge of only one side." A little knowledge of this Law is often distinctly dangerous and has a certain paralysing effect, because one of the results of knowing a little about it is the tendency to sit down and say: "Oh, it is my karma." It is like a man knowing something of the law of gravitation sitting down helplessly at the foot of the stairs and saying: "As I must move to the centre of the earth, I cannot go up."

The Law of Karma like all other Laws of Nature binds the ignorant and gives power to the wise; it is not a compelling, but an enabling, force, and says that while we are bound by what we have done in the past, we can each moment mould and modify the future by the choices we make, and that, exertion or the effort of the present, is greater than destiny or the result of the past, as explained also by Bhishma, the Master of Dharma.

Our karma is of a mixed character, not a great stream to sweep us on, but one made up of currents running in various directions, some neutralising one another, with an extremely small net result. Thus all weights in the balance of karma not being in one scale, and those weights being evenly balanced, a finger's weight can turn the scale ; and though out of the past thoughts, desires and actions some are with us and some against us, forming our so-called destiny, by our present exertion we can easily turn the scale either side we like and conquer our past.

Again, when an opportunity presents itself, we need not hesitate to take advantage of it, fearing our resources as inadequate to discharge the responsibility. That opportunity would not be there unless our karma had brought it to us as a fruit of past desires, and the very effort to seize it would awaken latent powers within us. We should aim at a little more than we think we can do, and the kârmic force acquired in the past comes to our aid ; and even if we fail, the power put forth passes into the reservoir of our forces, and the failure of to-day will be the victory of to-morrow. Circumstances may be adverse, but we may have reached a point when one more effort, a little more exertion, may mean success.

Q. I understand that the bonds of a man are of his own making, but how is he guided into his environments of nation and family ?

Ans. In one single life an ego cannot reap all the harvest of the past, nor discharge the obligations contracted towards other egos.

The etheric mould of the reincarnating ego is guided, as explained in Chapter IV, to the country, the race, the family and the social surroundings which afford the most suitable field for the working out of the karma

allotted to that particular life-span, though sometimes, at a later stage in evolution, he is guided to a particular place for the exercise of the faculties and qualities which are already developed in him but which are required for helping others.

He is placed where he can come into relationship with egos related to him in the past. A country is chosen where the conditions are suitable for his capacities, a race selected of which the characteristics resemble some of his faculties, and a family found with a physical heredity suitable for his physical constitution to work out his karma allotted for that life. Thus "the accident of birth is no accident at all, but just an inevitable result of causes, attractions, affinities, set up by an ego, during his past lives, which impel him, when he is ripe for rebirth, to that incarnation which is best fitted to give them physical expression".

Sometimes an ego after having gained certain mental faculties is given some task of an uncongenial nature. If ignorant of karma, he will perform his distasteful duties grudgingly and think regretfully of his "wasted talents, while that fool X is in a much higher position"; but he should "chafe not at Karma, nor at nature's changeless laws," and should realise that X has to learn his lesson there, and that he himself having learnt it would gain nothing by repeating it, and should set himself to learn the new lesson by addressing himself contentedly to the uncongenial task, seeking to understand what it has to teach him.

Again, an ego wanting to help in a larger work finds himself encumbered with family duties. If ignorant of karma, he frets against his bonds, or even breaks them, not knowing that he is thereby ensuring their return in future. The knower of karma will see in these duties the

reactions from his own past activities, and will patiently accept and discharge them. He knows that when his debts are fully paid, these duties will drop away from him leaving him free for higher work, and that meanwhile they have some lessons to teach him which it is incumbent upon him to learn in order to become a more efficient helper.

Q. If one particular action be done with different motives, does not the motive affect the result ?

Ans. Every force works on its own plane. From physical agony inflicted results physical agony endured, and motive does not mitigate the result just as the pain of a burn is not mitigated because the injury was sustained in saving a child from fire. Motive is a mental or astral force, according as it arises from will or desire, and it reacts on mental and moral character or on the desire-nature severally. A person may be born deformed, but with a gentle and patient character, showing that he had worked in his past life with a good motive intellectually misdirected, like a vivisector or an inquisitor. But the causing of physical happiness is a physical force and must work out on the physical plane.

Three men may contribute to presenting a free hospital or school to a town from different motives—the first from a purely philanthropic motive, the second from mere ostentation or from a selfish desire to get a title, and the third from mixed motives. Each man's physical action brings relief to the suffering or knowledge to the ignorant, irrespective of the different motives, so all the three contributors will receive equally comfortable physical environments next life, but their motives will severally affect their characters in their future incarnations for improvement or degradation. Moreover, the use which each man makes of his wealth and the happiness which he derives therefrom

will depend on his character, the first man using it for philanthropic and charitable, and the second for selfish purposes. Though the selfish man will get easy and pleasant surroundings on the physical plane as the reaction of his contribution to the hospital or school fund, his selfishness will also sow according to its kind, and mentally and morally he will reap that harvest also, a harvest of disappointment and pain. By giving money to deserving charity either through a selfish motive or through compulsion or force of circumstances in one life, a man may gain riches in another life, but this he may lend at a high interest and may be too selfish and niggardly to spend. The miserly rich, who simply go on hoarding money without being themselves happy by its use or making others so, are thus explained.

Even where heavenly enjoyments are gained by charity, it is the charitable *heart* rather than the nature of the gifts made which wins heavenly enjoyment. Gifts of money which cause widespread happiness bring, as their karma, worldly prosperity in another life; the loving thoughts which prompt the gifts bear fruit in heaven. Gifts made grudgingly or with a selfish object in view, even when they bring worldly prosperity, do not bring happiness. Therefore it is that the *Bhagavad-Gita* distinguishes between the three kinds of charity, Sāttvic, Rājasic and Tāmasic; of harmony, of passion, of darkness—alms given in a fit place and time to a worthy person without thought of reward, that given grudgingly with a view to receiving in return, and that given, disrespectfully and contemptuously, at an unfit place and time and to unworthy persons, respectively.

Hence motive is of more importance than action and a mistaken action done with a good motive is better

than a well-chosen action with a bad motive. The motive reacts on character and gives rise to a long series of effects, for the future actions guided by that character will all be influenced by its nature ; whereas an action bringing on its doer physical happiness or unhappiness, according to its result on others, has in it no generating force, but is exhausted in its results.

Q. But how is it that some persons with good motives yearning to help others find their way blocked either from want of power, defective capacity or lack of opportunity ?

Ans. Opportunities for service taken in one life result in enlarged opportunities of service in another, while wasted opportunities result in limitations in the body or unfortunate surroundings, and are thus transformed into frustrated longings. The etheric brain may be built defectively, and the ego though full of plans may lack executive ability. Such a man can advise others to their advantage, but is himself unsuccessful when following his own advice.

The karma of a good life is not the acquisition of wealth, or even of high intellectual endowments, but wider opportunities for service, either in the line followed in the past or in new lines opening up before the ego, to make him a better instrument, in the hands of the higher powers, for the helping of the world. Any person who is using all the powers he has for the service of others and without thought of self is very likely to receive new powers. It is the old parable of the talents over again. Those who made good use of their talents were given charge of far greater work. It was said to each of them : "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things ; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." The joy of the Lord—the joy of the Logos—is in His work. For "God has a plan, and that plan is evolution" ; He has chosen to throw

Himself absolutely into His mighty work of evolution ; that is the joy of the Lord, the joy of carrying out this splendid plan of pouring out His love through the universe. He who wishes to enter into the joy of the Lord, *i.e.*, take part in the work of evolution and in the bliss which it brings, should therefore use every talent he already has and see that he is using it to the utmost.

Q. Why does a man have a 'bad heredity' or congenital diseases ?

Ans. A 'bad heredity' is the reaction from wrong activities in the past. The drunkard of a previous life will be born into a family with nervous diseases like epilepsy, while a profligate will get birth in a family tainted with diseases of sexual vice. Congenital diseases result from a defective etheric double given to the ego by the Lords of Karma for his excesses and errors of the past. When desires in one life are bestial, cruel, unclean, they are the causes in another life of congenital diseases, of weak and diseased brains, giving rise to epilepsy, catalepsy and other nervous disorders.

Q. Now what solution does Theosophy give of the old problem of necessity and free-will ? Is a man completely under the sway of destiny or necessity with no room for free-will, or does he enjoy unfrustrated free-will ?

Ans. Only the One is absolutely free, but man is relatively free within self-imposed limitations, and while powerless to stop the march of evolution, the Will of the Divine, he can work for or against the evolutionary law, hastening or retarding his own progress within certain limits according to his will. He has by the exercise of his free-will created necessities for himself, made habits by repetition of actions guided by his own will, which habits then become limitations.

It is advisable to grasp a few simple principles and apply them to solve details, instead of taking up separate details without any idea of underlying principles. First: the Spirit in man, the Jivātma, the Self, is a fragment of the Divine, a "*portion of Myself, a living being*". Secondly: this Spirit on the Ātmic plane is free and omniscient, but he wills to live also on other planes, to see, hear, taste, etc., on denser planes of being; the exercise of powers gives pleasure and he wills to experience this. Thirdly: when he thus plunges into denser matter, his powers cannot assert themselves, and he is as a seed, a germ of Divine Life, enveloped in avidyā or ignorance; he becomes bound from outside. Fourthly: slowly he learns to shape the matter, so that he can express himself through it, and his efforts at first are mere blind pushings and gropings in different directions, some bringing him pleasure and others pain. Fifthly: he *desires* pleasure; he *thinks* how to obtain it; he *acts* according to his thought. Thus he makes fetters for his future; for he must go to the place where his desires can be gratified; he must work in the mental body which his thoughts have formed; he must be surrounded by the circumstances his acts have created; thus he becomes bound from within by the three threads of the cord of fate, explained before. Sixthly: but, amid all these outward and inward bindings, he himself remains the free Divinity; he can exercise his free-will, even though the carrying out of that will is hampered by the outer bonds which he has voluntarily assumed for the sake of experiencing the phenomena of the denser planes, and by the inner bonds which he has forged in his struggles with the denser matter.

All our circumstances are the result of our karma, which creates necessities for us, but in spite of being limited

by these self-imposed bonds we can mould the future and, though we cannot transcend the limits suddenly, we can extend them gradually, till we acquire for ourselves practically unbounded freedom in the direction of good. Our brain and nervous system, constituted now according to our own thoughts of the past, are the marked necessities of life for us and limit us, but they can be gradually improved. Ignorance is the cause of bondage, while knowledge brings liberation and freedom of will, for through wisdom a man knows himself as one with the Divine Life and acts as a free and responsible agent in harmony with the Divine Will.

But "we have a very distinct consciousness of free-will in the choice between good and evil at every step through life, and we need not confuse our sense of that freedom by going into the highest metaphysics of the problem".

Q. Is astrology true? If so, how can it be reconciled with free-will?

Ans. Modern astrology, being very fragmentary, is often very uncertain in its results; but there is a true science of Astrology, and here and there a real astrologer may be found. Even modern astrology, however, is often fairly accurate in the delineation of character. For the most part, modern astrological prognostications of events are unreliable, and the predictions are not always true, because all the conditions are not known. Every star has its own magnetic sphere, and these spheres intermingle in a very intricate way; according to the constitution of the human being, some magnetic conditions are favourable to him, and others unfavourable.

There is no antagonism between astrology and free-will. A horoscope, if correctly drawn, shows the

results of a man's past karma in his character, tendencies, circumstances, etc. An astrologer may correctly predict certain events or circumstances, but knowing only one of a pair of forces, he cannot forecast the resultant and cannot predict how the man will react on those circumstances by his free-will. The reaction, in the case of a feeble soul, will be slight and cause but small changes, whereas, in the case of a strong soul who can bring all the force of his free-will to bear on circumstances, it is bound to be great and may upset all calculations. Hence the astrological proverb: "The wise man rules his stars, while the fool is ruled by them."

Q. Now instead of being liberated from the bonds of karma allotted for one life, how does a man forge new links in the chain of karma ?

Ans. The Lords of Karma in carrying out Their work use other persons as Their instruments of reward or punishment. Thus though we are being used as mere tools in Their hands for the settling of different people's accounts, we have a false idea that we are free agents. So when a man injures us, we do not understand that he was merely instrumental in giving us our due, but become angry with him and try to retaliate, thereby creating fresh karma, and forget the remarks in the Gospel on that subject: "It must needs be that offences come, but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." None in this world suffers for the sin or fault of another, though through our short-sightedness we believe ourselves wronged by others for no fault of ours.

The wise, knowing this, and understanding that they should "chafe not at Karma nor at nature's changeless laws," get angry with none, and suffering the wrong or dishonour without grumbling, liberate themselves from the

karma allotted for one life (called Prārabdha), while the ignorant through anger and grumbling create new karma (called Kriyamāna), which being added to the accumulated karma of past lives (called Sanchita), comes back again in a new life as Prārabdha. Thus through ignorance a man creates new karma before the old karma is exhausted, and so can have no chance of liberation from the bonds of birth and death.

Q. But if some one injures us, how can we know whether it was the result of our Prārabdha? Bound by Prārabdha, what action do we do under its pressure and what by our own free-will?

Ans. In a universe of perfect justice none suffers without cause or for the fault of another, as stated before, and the fact that we could be injured proves that we deserved the injury by our Prārabdha, even though the man who inflicted the injury, acting as a tool of the Lords of Karma, thinks that he acted on his own initiative.

Karma is divided into three parts or is of three kinds:

1. Sanchita (=accumulated) karma, that is, karma which has accumulated during many lives. In the earlier lives as a savage it is natural that there should be on the whole more of evil karma than good. So only a portion of his whole karma is given to him to be worked out in the next life and the balance kept as Sanchita, as otherwise the undeveloped ego would be crushed under the entire result of his actions. Again, some of a man's actions need more time for their working out and have to pass into Sanchita.

2. Prārabdha (=commenced, to be worked out in this life,) or ripe karma, karma selected from the Sanchita by the Lords of Karma for a man to discharge in

his present life. This is what we ordinarily call fate, luck or destiny. Out of the total karma of the past only a portion can be exhausted within the limits of a single life. There are some kinds of karma which are too incongruous to be worked out in a single physical body of one particular type ; there are liabilities contracted towards other souls who are not all likely to be in incarnation at the same time ; there is karma requiring to be worked out in some particular nation or particular social position, while the same man may have other karma needing an entirely different environment. Part, therefore, of his total karma of the past is selected by the Lords of Karma to be worked out within the span of a single life, and this is called his *Prārabdha*. It is such karma that can be sketched out in a horoscope cast by a competent astrologer.

3. *Kriyamāna*, the karma which is in the course of making while *Prārabdha* is being worked out, and which being added to *Sanchita* karma will, when ripe, be meted out as *Prārabdha* in a future life.

It is wrong to believe that whatever we have to do unwillingly is the result of *Prārabdha* and that which we do willingly or carelessly is the result of our free-will. The law of gravitation applies equally to a mountain as well as to an atom ; similarly *Prārabdha* applies to all our actions, big or small.

Q. But that means that we are slaves of our Prārabdha and have no place for free-will.

Ans. The pressure of *Prārabdha* lies in some measure on our actions, but not on our free-will. Though limited by *Prārabdha* we enjoy *Purushārtha* or free-will, and our *Kriyamāna* depends on that. When doing any action our attitude of mind is a matter of free-will, and that makes our *Kriyamāna*. Take the instance, given before, of the

three men who give a million pounds each for a charitable institution, one doing it from a philanthropic motive, another in the hope of reward, and the third from mixed motives. The Kriyamāna of all the three would be different according to the motives, as explained before; and that karma being added to Sanchita would be meted out, when ripe, to each as his Prārabdha in a future life, and would be the chief factor in causing a difference in their future destinies. Kriyamāna thus depending on our free-will even when we are under the influence of Prārabdha, the Prārabdha of our future lives is in our own hands.

Q. But if one is responsible simply for his Kriyamāna, and not for the actual action done, and if there is pressure of Prārabdha in all actions, why should a murderer be hanged for murder or a thief punished for theft?

Ans. If we admit that a man is responsible for his Kriyamāna we must punish murderers and thieves, because their present Prārabdha is the result of their past Kriyamāna for which they are responsible. Again, every actual action is a blend of Prārabdha and Kriyamāna—never one or the other alone.

Though all actions, big or small, are, in some measure, under the influence of Prārabdha, they can be stopped or altered in their effect. Prārabdha is in fact divided into three classes: 1st—Dradha, fixed, unavoidable, or inevitable. 2nd—Adradha, not fixed, avoidable. 3rd—Dradha-adradha, fixed-not-fixed. Of these the Dradha Prārabdha karma cannot be avoided, but the other two kinds can be avoided or altered in their effects by the force of free-will.

Q. Supposing that Dradha Prārabdha is unavoidable, how can we escape the effects of the other two kinds of Prārabdha?

Ans. The Dradha Prārabdha karma cannot be altered at all ; Dradhādradha can be altered in its effect by great effort, while Agradha Prārabdha can be easily altered or shaken off. As on a rope in a tug-of-war, each action has two forces playing on it at the same time—Prārabdha and free-will. Where the force of Prārabdha is greater than that of free-will, the resultant lies with Prārabdha, and free-will cannot alter it ; when both forces are equal, it is Dradhādradha, and where the force of free-will is greater than that of Prārabdha, it is Agradha. Thus though in the bondage of Prārabdha, a man can liberate himself in proportion to his free-will.

A man pits his force against that of a ball thrown towards him. If it is a cannon-ball that is discharged, he cannot catch it or prevent its action. That is Dradha Prārabdha. A cricket ball can be caught with great effort or at least have the direction of its motion altered ; that is Dradhādradha Prārabdha. A light rubber ball caught with very little effort typifies Agradha Prārabdha. Very few actions in our life are unavoidably fixed. We come across few cannon-balls of destiny in life, but many cricket and rubber balls, and should therefore exert the full force of our free-will against any evil karma.

Q. You advise exertion in all cases, but if a man be bound by Dradha Prārabdha, how is effort or exertion of Purushārtha (free-will) going to help him ?

Ans. There are cases where the force of the karma of the past is so strong that no effort of the present can suffice to overbear it entirely. Yet should we make all effort to escape every kind of evil Prārabdha, first because one cannot know whether a karma was Dradha or Agradha Prārabdha, and, at the worst, the effort diminishes the karmic force for the future ; and secondly

because one creates good Kriyamāna by the effort one makes.

It may seem that the limits of a man's power to choose between different courses in life are very narrow, apart altogether from the metaphysical argument ; that there he is, with his character got at somehow, established as a very commanding impulse in his nature, and that the circumstances in which he is placed, are there also, with no choice of his ; how can he help following the bent of his nature ? But that is his karma. Of course it is a very difficult thing to escape from its influence—in one sense impossible. But karma is a growing force, and our free-will does enable us to modify its growth ; and our bent in the next life will be either still more defined in its present direction, or inclined in a different direction according to whether in this life we yield to it without resistance or press against its influence.

A man with a tendency to steal should fight against it to the last iota of resistant power, and though he may fail and commit the crime, its force will grow weaker in the future. Carelessness creates new bad Kriyamāna to come back as bad Prārabdha in future lives.

The bulk of the karma of an ordinary man may be classed as Dradha. He has not much will and therefore accepts the ruling of external circumstances which are due to his past actions. All the events of his life could be foretold in considerable detail from his horoscope, which is not the case with a man of strong will who has great power over his circumstances owing to the force of his free-will.

Q. But if a man can thus alter Prārabdha by the force of his free-will, will that not be interfering with the justice of karma ? Suppose A has injured B in a past life

and that B is now in a position to injure A according to his karma. But if B by his own free-will declines to injure A, how is the latter to get his due? If every one did like that, will that not prevent the working out of kârmic laws?

Ans. None need flatter himself with the idea that his will is strong enough to interfere even a tittle with the karma of others. Again, though anyone may be used as a tool in giving happiness or misery to others as destined for them, if a person forbears doing an evil deed by the exercise of his free-will, those destined to suffer do not escape their punishment, but the Lords of Karma arrange some other way to mete out the punishment through other agents and by other means.

Q. *If every person has thus to suffer inevitably according to his karma, why should we interfere with kârmic justice by trying to help the blind, the crippled or other deserving people in difficulty, who may simply be undergoing the just punishment of their past karma?*

Ans. It should again be remembered that there is no reward or punishment in karma. Karma is educative, not punitive, and is merely a sequence of conditions as explained before.

“Ho! ye who suffer! know
Ye suffer from yourselves. None else compels.”

It is true that all kinds of evils and sufferings around us are the results of karma, but that is no reason why we should not labour to change them. None suffers ought which he does not deserve, but our duty is simply to help and leave the carrying out of the Law in Divine Hands.

“Let thy soul lend its ear to every cry of pain like as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun.

"Let not the fierce sun dry one tear of pain before thyself hast wiped it from the sufferer's eye.

"But let each burning human tear drop on thy heart and there remain ; nor ever brush it off until the pain that caused it is removed."

Moreover, we do not know at what time a man has fully paid his debt of pain and suffering, and if he is to receive his due relief kârmically, why should we not become the agents of such good deeds ? Even selfishly we should try to help when another suffers under his karma, for, if we do not do our best, we are making a karma which will entail absence of help in the hour of our own need. The act of relieving suffering contracts the domain of suffering both here and hereafter, both as regards the recipient of relief and the agent in conferring that relief ; while cruelty and callousness to suffering augments it in both directions.

Again, it is absurd to believe that high Beings like the Lords of Karma and Their agents will be confounded in their work by the interference of such petty creatures as ourselves. If a man does not deserve help, or if the proper time has not come for his relief, he will not be benefited by our help, *e.g.*, he may drop the money given him through a hole in his pocket, but we shall be creating good karma and acquiring merit by our unselfish act. Moreover, we should not have come in contact with the man unless relief was due to him at the time. So we should try to help all sufferers to the best of our ability and give up the foolish idea that we can interfere with another's karma. In fact, it is the highest ideal of its kind to consider our contact with every one whom we meet, even casually, as an opportunity given us for the helping of that person by all possible means.

Q. If the Law of Karma is irresistible, are prayers for averting sorrow, or winning happiness, useless ?

Ans. This question is often asked, but it springs from a confused idea of karma. Karma is a result of the past which is continually being strengthened or weakened, a cord of destiny made up of innumerable threads of desires, thoughts and actions, some working in one direction and some in another. The answer in any given case depends on the constituents of the karma which is acting. If it is very strong in one direction, *i.e.*, is Dradha karma, enough desire, thought and action cannot be put against it in the present to neutralise the past, or turn the result in the opposite direction. But if it be weak in one direction, *i.e.*, be Adradha or Dradhādradha karma, very strong desire, thought and action, brought to bear in that direction, may be able to overbear it. Prayer may thus turn the balance where the scale of karma is not heavily weighted, for prayer, being a strong desire, is of the nature of one of the constituents of karma.

Q. How is a selfish man punished in his next life by karma ?

Ans. There is no punishment or reward in karma as stated before, but there is the effect following inevitably from causes set going. Selfishness is a mental attitude, and its immediate results must be on the mental plane. There is an intensification of the lower personality, so that the man grows steadily more selfish life after life and is deprived of the opportunity to progress. Again, there would be karma generated on the physical plane by the unkind acts of selfishness, and as one result he may be reborn among selfish people and learn through suffering the heinousness of this vice.

Q. You say a selfish man grows steadily more and more selfish in each succeeding life ; but if a vicious man comes back in the next life more vicious than before, and so on and on, how can a bad man ever become good ?

Ans. There are certain counteracting forces which have to be considered.

1. Unhappiness follows on vice, to some extent in this world, to a great extent in the next. The drunkard develops a bloated, coarsened body with nerves shaken and health ruined and regrets his folly, while the suffering grows keener after death in the astral world. At the end of his heavenly life the good side of him is strengthened and his faculties are improved, but on his return to earth he also brings with him, as the result of his sad experience, a shrinking from the evil in which he delighted in his past physical life.

2. Humanity as a whole is being slowly carried forward by the great current of evolution, and an evil-doer is compulsorily carried with it even though he may foolishly retard his progress greatly. But this wilful setting of the individual will against the universal Will causes a friction, that becomes intolerably painful and compels the man to cease from his evil course.

3. The evil-doer may read a book, hear a discourse or meet a person, that may arouse in him a recognition of the folly of his course, and he may open his eyes to the suffering he is creating for himself and may thereby make an effort to change.

4. The disapproval of those he loves and honours and the desire to gain their affection, may act upon him as an incentive to better life.

5. The mere fact of his own growth, the unfolding, however slow, of the divine Spirit within him, inevitably

quickens the inborn tendency to good and causes a struggle against evil.

Q. But if karma is the Law of Justice, why does a good man fail in business while a bad man succeeds ?

Ans. There is no causal connection between goodness and money-making. One might as well say : " I am a good man, why can't I fly in the air ? " Goodness is not a cause of flying nor does it bring in money. Virtue is its own reward, and if we are truthful, our reward consists in the happiness arising from our nature growing more truthful. If a man acts in harmony with the divine Law, happiness is the result of such harmony. This question is usually asked owing to the error of identifying worldly success with happiness and of disregarding the element of time.

If a business man who is determined to be truthful does not become discouraged when he sees unscrupulous persons going ahead of him, but stands firm and works in harmony with the divine Law, regardless of immediate worldly results, he wins inner peace and happiness though great financial success may not accrue to him. Even that may fall to his lot in the long run when his reputation has been established, so that he will ultimately come to enjoy both the good-will and the custom of the public.

Material prosperity, again, is very often the worst enemy of virtue, and though welcomed as good karma, is often the reverse in its results. It is a matter of common experience that many a man who does fairly well in adversity becomes intoxicated with worldly success and prosperity, and falls away from the path of virtue.

We should not therefore think of the rewards of good karma as consisting solely in material objects. The opportunities of spiritual development, which a poor and even a sorrow-stricken man may enjoy in any given life,

may benefit him in the long run so greatly as to have outweighed the evil of poverty and transitory sorrows. A good karma may sometimes have produced a life, the mere outward troubles of which we should be apt, if we are hasty, to set down to bad karma. Similarly, a bad karma may temporarily disguise its effect in material prosperity that may bring great suffering in its train in the long run, by furnishing the possessor with so many more opportunities of accentuating an evil bent. This is the significance of the Indian story of a poor man who having won a case against his rich adversary, when asked by the king to suggest the punishment, begged that more wealth might be bestowed on his rich but evil-minded enemy.

Q. Are all our sufferings the result of our past karma ?

Ans. A large proportion of a man's suffering is what is called 'ready money karma,' not due to the result of actions of past lives, as nine-tenths of our suffering is merely the outcome of mistaken action through ignorance in the present life.

Q. Is the wrong we suffer the working of our own Prārabdha karma of a past life, or is it possible that sometimes this is not so ? Why do we see good and holy persons very often suffering in this world ?

Ans. The 'fate' selected for the individual is not absolutely rigid and immutable, as a man can and does change his fate sometimes, by an unusual reaction to circumstances. For example, suicide is not in a man's fate though his visible and invisible circumstances with their griefs and worries may, seemingly to us, be too much for his strength. Again, a man's karma may be, as it were, put out of gear by the actions of others which are not provided for in his life-karma. Similarly, he may take an opportunity not specially arranged for him ;

for instance, by taking advantage of the presence of some religious teacher whose appearance is not specially related to him, he may make for himself a new opportunity. Still nothing can happen to a man which is not due to his own karma. There is a large reserve of karma not actually in operation, *i.e.*, Sanchita karma, as stated before, and the new karma is deducted from or added to this reserve, so that finally there is no favouritism or injustice.

Every one has a vast store of Sanchita karma which must be worked out before he can be finally liberated. But as soon as he understands the purpose of life, and taking his own evolution earnestly in hand endeavours to eradicate the evil and rapidly to develop the good within himself in order to become ever a more and more perfect channel of the Divine Love, the Lords of Karma, in recognition of his earnest desire, increase the amount of evil karma to be worked out in the present life and help him to discharge his old debt quickly. \ Thus many holy and earnest souls seem to suffer because they are making very rapid progress and are quickly paying off the debt (since they have made themselves strong enough to do so) in order that it may be cleared out of the way of their future work.

Q. Then what about the so-called accidents, say a railway accident or a shipwreck, or seismic catastrophes like an earthquake, where many suffer together ?

Ans. People with appropriate individual karma are gathered together to suffer collectively in such cases. Again, souls are gathered into groups of families, castes, nations, races, etc., considered as larger individuals and have their own collective karma ; and it is here that room is found for the so-called accidents as well as for the adjustments continually being made by the Lords of

Karma. Nothing can happen to a man that is not in his karma as an individual, but a man can still enjoy or suffer through family or national ties in a way not inherent in his life-karma, and so receive or pay kârmic debts, before they are due, as we may say. The rise and fall of nations, seismic changes like earthquakes, volcanoes and floods, or national catastrophes like plague and famine, are all cases of collective karma.

Each person has made a large and varied collection of evil karma in the course of ages, and so advantage is sometimes taken of a catastrophe or a collective accident, like a shipwreck, to enable a man to work off a portion of the evil karma—Sanchita karma—not normally due in the life in which it occurs, to pay a kârmic debt, as it were, before it is due. Such an opportunity, offered by an accident, would be generally taken by the choice of the ego, especially if he happened to be an advanced ego, over whom some unpaid debt of sudden death had been hanging for several lives as a kind of shackle or fetter, preventing his going on and hindering his progress. Still, unless he owed such a death to the Law, or, with such a debt, was advanced enough to take advantage of that opportunity, he could not die, but would furnish one more instance of the miraculous escapes of which we so frequently hear.

Q. As every man's actions invariably affect many others around him, will he have to meet all those to settle his kârmic account?

Ans. The effects in many cases are trivial, though in some they may be of a serious character. Trivial effects, good or bad, are merely small debits or credits in our account with Nature, though greater effects of either kind, especially when there is a distinct personal relationship of

love or hatred, makes a personal account which has to be settled with the persons concerned. A man giving a meal to a hungry beggar or causing a petty annoyance to another need not meet that other man, as he will receive the result of his good or bad action from the general fund of Nature, but if he changes the current of another's life by a great benefit or a serious harm, he must, sooner or later, meet that other man to adjust the debt. In short, small debts go into the general fund, while big ones must be paid personally.

Q. Are the exact time and manner of a man's death decided at or before his birth ?

Ans. No. Even astrologers cannot actually foretell the death of a man, but can merely say that at a certain time malefic influences are strong and the man may die, but that if he does not, his life will continue until other evil aspects threaten him. These uncertainties are points left open for a later decision, depending on the use the man makes of his opportunities and the modifications he introduces by his actions during that life.

There are certain causes which work towards a man's leaving his physical body, and during the course of his life-period his past karma may bring him several times to what may be called a rather critical stage ; but other causes may be brought to bear upon him, and upon the resultant of these forces will depend whether he passes out of the physical body at that time or not. Thus though the time of a man's dying out of the physical body is not fixed, the life-period which he has to spend under physical conditions is fixed, and if he passes out of earthly life before that period is completed on the physical plane, he has to live on for the remainder of it under what may be called partly-earth-life conditions in the astral world. His

physical body has been struck away before its life-period is over. But the normal condition after death only sets in when that earthly life-period is fully exhausted. A number of verses in the Indian Shāstras imply that death only comes at a fixed time, and, normally, death does so come. But when it is said: "Before the period comes, a lance will not kill; when it comes a blade of grass is enough to kill," the true conception is that, when the time comes, the smallest cause will bring about the striking away of the physical body, but that if the time has not come, even a violent cause—a lance—cannot alter the *life-period*, still it may strike away the physical body.

People whose minds are not clear over the question say: "If a person's life-period is fixed, if the death-hour is fixed, it is no good nursing him or calling in a doctor; he will live or die according to his karma." That is a serious mistake, for, as explained before, at a critical period like this, exertion or present activities may considerably modify or even entirely change the result and ensure him the use of his physical vehicle up to the end of his life-period.

Thus the fact is that the period of life under physical conditions *is* fixed; the period of striking off the physical body *is not* fixed. At one point or another death may come. There will be times when, because of the Dhradha karma, death cannot be averted, but there may be other periods (of Adhradha or Dhradhādhradha karma) when an added force may turn it away like any other kind of karma. There are points that are certain, and there are those that may be varied by exertion.

Q. Is there karma among animals? If not, how do you account for the difference in their conditions, one

being kindly treated and well-fed, and another subjected to brutality and left to starve and fight for a bare living ?

Ans. One should know first that an animal often does make a good deal of karma through the group-soul, though not individually ; and secondly, that well-treated animals have not so much advantage as they seem to have. The sporting dog is taught to be more savage and brutal, killing for the lust of destruction, whereby his group-soul makes bad karma, for which that group-soul will have to suffer later on through other dogs which are but expressions of it ; while a lap-dog loses all canine virtues and earns the karma of selfishness for his group-soul. A group-soul with its many animal manifestations may be compared to a whole body with several limbs and organs, and if an organ or limb is afflicted with pain through disease, we do not speak of such a limb as an individual worthy of compassion, as something apart from the whole body.

If an animal be ill-treated by a man, it must be a spontaneous act of injustice on that man's part, as it cannot be the result of a previous karma on the part of that particular animal which, not having been individualised, is incapable of carrying over karma. Still the thing could not happen unless the group-soul of which that ill-used animal forms a part had acquired bad karma in the past, which is now paid by the group-soul through the manifestation of that particular animal, that bad karma being created by intentional fights between bulls, stags, dogs, cats, etc., where pain is wilfully inflicted, though the prey killed by a wild beast for food does not suffer appreciably.

Any way 'the human beast' treating an animal cruelly and causing it to fight and inflict pain on others, instead of helping that animal placed in his hands to receive stimulus for evolution by human contact, is storing

up exceedingly heavy karma for himself, and in many and many a life to come will suffer the just result of his abominable brutality.

Q. You have explained the working of karma, but how can a man mould his karma deliberately and so modify his destiny?

Ans. He should first examine the three threads of the cord of fate explained before, inspect carefully his stock-in-trade, inborn faculties and qualities, good and bad, powers and weaknesses, present opportunities and actual environments; then selecting the qualities which are desirable to strengthen he can set to work and modify his character very rapidly, taking the qualities one by one as stated before, and using thought-power to acquire them, never thinking of the weakness but its corresponding power; and thus thinking on that which he desires to be, inevitably though gradually he becomes that under the Law. If he made mistakes in the past, he can modify the results considerably by setting in operation neutralising forces. Thus if he sends a strong thought of love immediately after he has made the mistake of thinking a thought of hate, he can overcome what otherwise would have been the inevitable effect of hate. Vibrations of hatred generated in past lives can also be similarly neutralised by setting up against them vibrations of love; and moreover, if another sends him a thought of hate, he can neutralise its effect, and even kill out that hate, by sending back a thought of love as "hatred ceaseth by love".

Looking to the second thread of the cord of fate, the desire-nature cannot be changed by desire, but can be modified by thought. He should mentally create thought-forms of the opportunity he wants and fix his will on those forms, drawing them within reach, thus literally making

and grasping the opportunities not presented by past karma. Again, suppose he is fond of dainty food and has the weakness of gluttony; he should then think of the disastrous results of the vice, *i.e.*, getting bloated and helpless with a disordered digestion, and by reining in the desire he should breed a disgust for that vice.

His environments are the hardest of all to change as they are in the densest form of matter, but he should set himself to change such undesirable part of them as can be changed by strenuous effort, while such as he cannot change he should accept and learn what it has to teach, when it will drop away like a worn-out garment. For example, in an undesirable family he should adapt himself to his circumstances and fulfil every obligation cheerfully and patiently to all egos drawn to him by his past, learning patience through their annoyances, fortitude through their irritations, forgiveness through their wrongs.

Thus working with free-will and necessity—with free-will but under conditions he has created by his past thought-nature, desire-nature and physical nature—he can mould his karma and make his future destiny.

One should study karma and apply the knowledge to the guidance of his life. Many people say: "Oh! how I wish I were good," but they do not take the trouble to create the causes which result in goodness. It is as though a chemist should say: "Oh! how I wish I had water," without making the conditions which would produce it.

Q. But since a man must return to earth over and over again till he has exhausted all his individual karma, and since a good karma drags a man back to birth as relentlessly as a bad one, how is he to cease generating

new karma and exhaust all past karma in order to attain liberation ?

Ans. A good karma done with the thought of reward will bind the man to earth by chains of gold as effectively as an evil karma binds him by chains of iron, and though he may get as his kârmic due worldly wealth and position, giving him many comforts and happinesses, yet without any inspirations or ideals from his past his life may be merely one of agreeable futility. The ignorant, in the enjoyment of senses, do not consider a good destiny as a bond, but the wise knowing it to be such try to be rid of good and evil destiny alike.

An action is prompted by desire, desire for the fruit of action moving a man to activity, and the enjoyment of the fruit rewards his exertion. Desire for fruit or attachment to the fruit of action is then the binding element in karma. To every action is bound its fruit, and desire is the cord that links them together, while with the burning of desire the connection is broken. So when a man longs for liberation, he has to practise renunciation of the fruit of action, gradually eradicating in himself the wish to possess any object for his own separate self. He should "desire to sow no seed for his own harvesting ; desire only to sow that seed the fruit of which shall feed the world." He should not neglect any duty, but discharge every duty perfectly while remaining indifferent to the fruit it brings forth. All his actions then partake of the nature of sacrifice, the fruit being given freely for the helping of men. Thus neither disliking nor desiring any object, he ceases to generate new karma. "'Tis from the bud of renunciation of the self, that springeth the sweet fruit of final liberation." "Man winneth not freedom from action by abstaining from activity." "The harmonised

man, having abandoned the fruit of action, attaineth to the eternal Peace ; the non-harmonised, impelled by desire, attached to fruit, are bound."

He has then to get rid of old chains and also to cease from the forging of new ones ; and for this knowledge is necessary. Looking back into his past lives he has to neutralise forces coming out of the past by sending against them forces equal and opposite, and burn up his karma by knowledge. He has also to meet the souls whom he has wronged and to pay his debts, thus working out kârmic obligations which would otherwise hamper and retard his progress.

Q. A man is drawn back to earth by desires, but the Masters having no desire, what is it which binds Them to earth ? Why do They leave the indescribable bliss of Nirvāna for the lower levels of the world of men ?

Ans. There is nothing that the world can offer Them which can draw Them back to earth ; but They stay in the world to help mankind. Even though feeling pity for men They do not come in the way of the kârmic law, as *Their* interference may really cause confusion ; still in accordance with the Law They do sometimes help men in suffering. Their work is not to put out fire, but to prevent its catching ; not to remove suffering, but to dispel ignorance, the root-cause of all suffering which binds man to earth through evil deeds. Thus They stay in this world to help Their younger brethren, and labour century after century for nothing this world can give Them save the joy of seeing other souls growing into Their likeness.

CHAPTER VI

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Question. What is the advantage of the knowledge, during life, of the conditions on the other side of death? Why should a man trouble his mind about these matters, when he is sure to find out the facts for himself after he dies?

Answer. This contention is defective in several ways. It takes no account of the terror which, from ignorance, overshadows the lives of so many, nor of the sorrows of separation and the anxiety felt by the survivors about the fate of the departed dear ones. The dread is inspired not so much by the definite expectation of anything appalling, as by the feeling of dim uncertainty, the horror of a vacant abyss. The above contention also ignores the fact that man after death does *not* immediately realise his mistakes, and that owing to his inability to correct them by the light of truth he has frequently to suffer much. The ordinary man without knowledge is bound on the astral plane by the desire-elemental, to be explained presently, and does not understand the possibilities of the life after death, thus missing many opportunities of service and progress.

Although the laws of nature are ever carrying us on with them whether we know it or not, yet if we know, we can co-operate with them to our great advantage.

This we cannot do if we are in the darkness of ignorance. To know is like walking in the light, and to understand the laws of nature is to gain the power of quickening our evolution by taking advantage of those laws that hasten our growth and avoiding the working of those that would retard or delay it.

Moreover, from a knowledge of the after-death existence a man realises the true proportion between the *physical fragment of life and the rest of it*, and so does not waste his time in working merely for the physical period which is but one-tenth or one-twentieth part of the whole life between two incarnations. Also when he reaches what is called the astral world, after death, he does not become alarmed, as he understands his surroundings and knows the best method of work there, and so has courage and confidence. Even a man who has heard Theosophical truths but once in a lecture, realising in the world after death the general accuracy of the remarks, tries to recall detailed suggestions as to conduct therein, and having at least one point of contact with the known can avoid much of the discomfort, bewilderment and fear, felt there by others through complete ignorance. But the greatest advantage of such knowledge is that he feels confident enough to lend a helping hand to others and thus generate good karma for himself.

Q. Then what becomes of a man on the other side of death?

Ans. In order to know that, one should understand properly what death is. There is a vast amount of utterly unnecessary sorrow, terror and misery which mankind in the aggregate has suffered and still suffers through ignorance and superstition about death which is looked upon as a formidable and terrible leap into an unknown abyss.

Death is at first the laying aside of the physical body, the outer garment of the ego or the real man, who then continues to live in his astral body until the force generated during earth-life by emotions and passions has become exhausted. Then a second death takes place ; and the astral body falling away from him, the man finds himself in his mental body in what is called the heaven-world. Here he has to stay till the force of unselfish thoughts generated during his physical and astral lives has worn itself out, and dropping that third body also, the man remains for a time as an ego in his own world in the causal body before returning to incarnation.

Thus death is nothing more than birth in another region, a repeated process of unrobing, the immortal man shaking off from himself one after another the outer casings and passing into a higher state of consciousness.

Q. How does the real man separate himself from his physical vehicle ?

Ans. During the slow process of dying the etheric double, carrying Prāna and the higher principles with it, is withdrawing from the dense body to which it is connected by a magnetic thread. At the solemn moment of death, even when it is sudden, the past life passes swiftly in review before the ego, a fact testified to by those rescued from drowning. The ego then lives over his whole life in those few seconds before actual death, when the personality, becoming one with the all-knowing ego and reviewing the entire life marshalled before him in its minutest details with the whole chain of causes and effects, sees himself unadorned by self-deception and understands the purpose of life. During the slow process of dying, extreme quiet and self-control should therefore be observed in the chamber of death so as not to disturb the ego absorbed in the

contemplation of the panorama of his past life, and no weeping or lamentation with the idea of a selfish personal loss should be permitted.

Slowly the man thus withdraws himself from the physical body enwrapped in the violet-grey etheric double until the magnetic tie breaks. He then sinks into a peaceful unconsciousness with the double floating above the dense body.

The acts of dying and going to sleep are similar except in a few particulars, as already explained in Chapter III. In both cases a man withdraws from the physical body. When he goes to sleep, he withdraws into his astral body and leaves the etheric body with his physical sheath, the currents of vitality playing through both and keeping them alive; but at death he draws out also the etheric double with him, and that double not being a vehicle, the man surrounded by it is usually unconscious, at least for a moment, and can function neither in the physical world nor in the astral.

After some time, varying from a few moments to a few hours, days or even weeks, (but ordinarily in about 36 hours,) the five higher principles disengage themselves from the etheric double, shaking it off as they formerly shook off the dense body and leaving it as a senseless corpse. The Prāna, thereby losing its vehicle, returns to the great reservoir of universal life, as water enclosed in an earthen pot and plunged into the ocean mingles with the ocean water if the pot be broken. The man is now left in his astral body, ready for the astral life.

Q. You speak of "sinking into a peaceful unconsciousness," but do we not actually find a man suffering terribly during his death-struggle?

Ans. Death-struggles and death-rattles are usually only final spasmodic movements of the physical body after the conscious ego has left it. In almost every case actual passing away is perfectly painless, even when there is long and terrible suffering in the illness. That is proved by the peaceful look which so often comes over the face after death, as well as by the direct testimony of most of those to whom the question has been put immediately after death.

Q. *What becomes of the separated etheric double after death?*

Ans. The physical body, left to the rioting of the countless lives previously held in constraint by Prāna acting through the etheric double, begins to decay, and its particles pass into other combinations as its cells and molecules disintegrate, and the etheric double remaining near its dense counterpart, shares the same fate, in a few weeks or months, for precisely the same reason—that the co-ordinating force of Prāna is then withdrawn from it. It must not, however, be supposed that these two disintegrations depend upon each other. Clairvoyants see these ethereal wraiths, which float in churchyards over graves where the coarser physical bodies are buried, sometimes showing a likeness to the dense body and sometimes as violet mists or lights. It is advisable for several reasons to burn the dense body rather than bury it.

Q. *Why is cremation preferable to burial?*

Ans. There are several reasons for it.

1. Nothing that is ordinarily done to the physical corpse need make any difference to the real man living on the astral plane, though it sometimes does so owing to his ignorance and foolishness. The length of a man's stay in the astral world after death depends on two factors—

the nature of his past physical life, and his attitude of mind after his death. During his earth-life he affects the building of his astral body directly by his passions and emotions, and indirectly by the action upon it of his thoughts from above, and of all the details of his physical life—his continence or his debauchery, his food and his drink—from below. If by persistence in evil passions and desires during earth-life he builds for himself a coarse astral vehicle, he will find himself after death bound to the astral plane during the long and slow process of that body's disintegration. On the other hand, if by decent living he gives himself a vehicle mainly composed of finer material, he will have very much less discomfort after death and will pass through the astral plane very rapidly.

This much is generally understood, but the second great factor—his attitude of mind after death—seems often to be forgotten. The desirable thing is for him to realise that he is at this stage withdrawing steadily towards the plane of the true ego, and that it is his business to disengage his thoughts as far as possible from things physical, and fix his attention more and more upon those spiritual matters which will occupy him later on upon Devachanic levels. By doing this he will greatly facilitate the natural astral disintegration and avoid the common mistake of unnecessarily delaying himself upon the lower levels of that plane.

Many people, however, simply will not turn their thoughts upwards. Earthly matters are the only ones in which they have ever had any living interest, and so they cling to them with desperate tenacity even after death. Of course the mighty force of evolution is eventually too strong for them, and they are swept on in its beneficent current ; yet they fight every step of the way,

not only causing themselves unnecessary trouble and sorrow, but also seriously delaying their upward progress. Now in this ignorant opposition to the cosmic will a man is much assisted by the possession of his physical corpse as a kind of fulcrum on the physical plane. He is naturally in very close rapport with it, and if he be so foolish as to wish to do so, he can use it as an anchor to hold him down firmly to the lower levels until its decomposition is far advanced. Thus while neither the burial nor the embalming of a corpse can in any way force the ego to whom it once belonged to prolong his stay upon the astral plane against his will, either of these causes is a distinct temptation to him to delay, and facilitates his doing so if he foolishly wish it. So cremation saves the man from himself in this matter, for when his body has been thus disposed of, his boats are literally burnt behind him, and his power of holding back is greatly diminished.

2. Whether the dense body is burnt, or allowed to decay slowly in the usual loathsome manner, or indefinitely preserved as an Egyptian mummy, the etheric double pursues its own line of quiet disintegration entirely unaffected ; still cremation is advisable from a sanitary point of view, as it averts many dangers to the living by the swift dissociation of the physical remnants.

3. Cremation entirely prevents any attempt at partial and unnatural temporary reunion of the principles by the galvanising of the etheric corpse in the neighbourhood of the dense body just after death, or at the grave even after burial.

4. It entirely prevents any endeavour to make use of the corpse for the purposes of the horrible rites of black magic, which very seriously affect the condition of the man on the astral plane.

Q. What then becomes of the man in his desire-body after he has shaken off the etheric double and is separated from Prāna ?

Ans. When the physical body is dropped at death, the whole arrangement of the sheaths of the personality begins to break up, and the astral body commences to disintegrate. The desire-elemental, the vague body-consciousness of the astral body, mentioned in Chapter III, feels it instinctively and at once takes fright. It fears that it will lose the habitation which enables it to remain apart from the rest and thus get an unusual opportunity for progress, and that the final dissipation of the astral body will end its own (elemental) life as a separate entity ; so it immediately sets to work to protect itself by a very ingenious method. The matter of the astral body is far more fluidic than that of the physical, and the elemental, seizing upon its particles, rearranges them, so that the rearranged astral body may resist as much of encroachment, friction or disintegration as its constitution permits, and may therefore retain its shape as long as possible. During earth-life the various kinds of astral matter intermingle in the formation of the astral or desire-body, but the rearrangement consists in the separation of its materials according to their densities into a series of seven concentric shells—the finest within and the densest without—each shell being made of the matter of one subplane.

Q. But how does this rearrangement by the desire-elemental affect the dead man ?

Ans. The physical body acquires its information from without by means of certain organs which are specialised as instruments of its senses. But the astral body has no separate organs, and what in the astral body corresponds to sight is the power of its molecules to respond to impacts

from without which come to them from similar molecules, so that a man can perceive an astral object of the matter of a particular subdivision only if on the surface of his astral body there are particles belonging to that subdivision. During physical life all the seven kinds of astral matter in his body intermingle and are in constant motion like particles of boiling water. At any given moment particles of all varieties are represented on the surface of his astral body, and therefore when he is functioning in that body during sleep, he is able to see any astral object of the matter of any subdivision. But owing to the rearrangement of the matter of his astral body into concentric layers which he ignorantly allows his astral elemental to make after death, he is confined to one subplane at a time, *i.e.*, his consciousness receives its impression only through one type of matter and thus obtains an exceedingly partial view of the world in which his lot is cast.

Having on the surface of his astral body only the lowest and grossest particles, he can receive impressions merely from corresponding particles outside. But the vibrations of such heavy matter being the expressions alone of objectionable feelings and emotions, and of the least refined class of astral entities, he can be conscious only of that lowest variety of astral matter which corresponds to the solid down here, and see merely the undesirable inhabitants of the astral world and feel only its most unpleasant and vulgar influences. Other men of quite ordinary character who surround him appear to him like monsters of vice, since he can see and feel only the coarsest in them. Even his friends, who have passed over a few years earlier and have transferred their consciousness to higher levels, seem not at all what they used to be,

because he is now incapable of appreciating any of their better qualities. Under these circumstances it is no wonder that he considers the astral world a hell ; yet the fault is in no way with the astral world, but with himself—first, for allowing within himself so much of that ruder type of astral matter, and secondly, for letting that vague astral consciousness dominate him and rearrange that astral matter in that particular way.

In course of time he will pass on to the higher subplanes, one after another, with the partial wearing out of each of the concentric shells, but the astral life of the man is thereby unduly prolonged and the progress of the soul retarded.

Q. You spoke of allowing the rearrangement through ignorance ; then can a man prevent it and, by saving himself from being confined to the lower subplanes, one after another, from below upwards, retain his capacity of seeing any astral object of the matter of any subplane ?

Ans. During life he can refuse to gratify his lower desires, replace all the low particles by higher and finer ones, and thus change the astral matter within him, building for himself an astral elemental of a high type.

Again, the ordinary man having no knowledge of these things quietly accepts the rearrangement after death, especially as the desire-elemental transfers to him its own fear of indescribable danger and destruction ; but the man should simply resist that unreasoning sense of dread by a calm assertion of knowledge, and declining to permit the case-hardening, which would confine him to a single subplane, he should insist upon keeping open his communications with the higher astral levels as well. He can thus escape the thralldom of the desire-elemental by slowly but steadily wearing out its resistance ; and being then in

practically the same position as that in which he used to function when he passed into the astral world in sleep during earth-life, he will be able to move about freely and to retain his power of seeing the whole of the astral world as before, and not merely the grosser and baser part of it. Then he can also help his friends by showing them how to liberate themselves. The habit of turning the thoughts inwards in meditation and the practice of directing the emotions by the will and intellect also prevent this "shell-ing," which is not usual among self-controlled people.

Q. What, then, is the state of an ordinary man in Kāmaloka immediately after death?

Ans. It is not certain that when the man is free from his etheric double, he will at once become conscious of the astral world, especially if he dies suddenly. For he has in him a good deal of the lowest kind of astral matter, and a shell of this may be made around him. Yet if he has learnt in good time to keep in check sensual desires of various kinds, his consciousness will not be in the habit of functioning through such matter. In the rearranged astral body that matter will gather outside, and will therefore be the only channel open to external impressions. Not being used to receiving this order of vibrations, the man cannot now develop all at once the power to function consciously through it and may therefore remain unconscious of all the unpleasantness of that lowest subplane, until that gross matter gradually wears away, and some matter which he is in the habit of using comes to the surface. Such an occlusion, however, is scarcely ever complete, for even in the most carefully made shell some particles of the finer matter occasionally find their way to the surface, and give him flitting glimpses of his surroundings.

Normally a dead man is unconscious until he has freed himself from the etheric double, and so when he awakens to a new life it is that of the astral plane. But some men, through ignorance, cling so desperately to physical existence, that they will not relax their hold upon the etheric double after death. They feel that that is at least some sort of link with the only world that they know. They may be successful in so retaining their hold for a considerable time, but only at the cost of great discomfort to themselves. The etheric double being only a part of the physical vehicle and not a vehicle in itself—a body to live and function in—such men cannot come fully into touch with the world of ordinary earth-life for want of physical sense-organs, while they are not conscious of the astral world owing to the shell of the etheric matter which surrounds them. They are thus shut out from both worlds, and find themselves surrounded by a dense grey mist, through which they see very dimly the things of the physical world, but with all the colour gone from them. Struggling terribly to maintain their position, they drift about in this condition of loneliness and misery, until from sheer fatigue their hold fails them, and they slip into the comparative happiness of astral life. Sometimes in their desperation they grasp blindly at other bodies—a baby body or even the body of an animal—and try to enter into them, and occasionally they are successful in such an attempt, though at the cost of further suffering to themselves in the near future. All this trouble and unhappiness, arising entirely from ignorance, can never happen to one who understands something of the conditions and laws of the life after death.

An ordinary man awaking on the astral plane after death will notice but little difference from what he has

been familiar with in the physical world. The astral world stretches to a little less than the mean distance of the orbit of the moon as explained in Chapter II, and the types of matter of the different subdivisions interpenetrate with perfect freedom, with a general tendency for the denser matter to settle towards the centre, whereby though the various subdivisions do not lie one above the other like the coats of an onion, the arrangement of the matter of those subdivisions partakes somewhat of that character.

The man who has not allowed rearrangement in his astral body has freedom of the whole astral world and can float about in any direction at will, though he generally stays in the neighbourhood to which he is accustomed, that is, where his interests lie.

Again, astral matter interpenetrates physical matter as though the latter were not there ; still each subdivision of physical matter has a strong attraction for astral matter of the corresponding subdivision. Hence every physical body has its astral counterpart, and the dead man is thus able to perceive his house, room, furniture, relatives and friends. The living think of the dead friend as lost, but that friend, though not seeing the physical bodies of the living, sees their astral bodies, *i.e.*, the astral counterparts corresponding exactly to the outlines of the physical bodies. He is thus aware of the presence of his friends, though he cannot make any impression upon them when they are awake with their consciousness in the physical world, nor communicate with them or read their higher thoughts. He can also see their emotions by the change in colour in their astral bodies. The friends, too, when asleep, are conscious in the astral world and can communicate with the dead one as freely as during physical life, though they may again forget everything when awake.

A man is in no way changed by death, but is in every respect the same man minus his physical body. His thoughts, desires and emotions are exactly the same, and his happiness or misery depends upon the extent to which the loss of the physical body affects him. He often does not believe he is dead as he sees the old familiar objects and friends about him, but the realisation comes as he finds that he cannot always communicate with them. He speaks to them even at once after death, and they do not seem to hear; he tries to touch them but finds himself making no impression on them. For a time he persuades himself that he is dreaming, but gradually discovers that after all he is dead.

Then he usually begins to become uneasy because of the defective teaching which he has received. He does not understand where he is, or what has happened, since his situation is not what he expected from the orthodox standpoint. As an English general once said in a similar condition: "But if I am dead, where am I? If this is heaven, I don't think much of it; and if it is hell, it is better than I expected."

A great deal of totally unnecessary uneasiness and even acute suffering has been thus caused by the baseless and blasphemous hell-fire theory, for it has worked evil beyond the grave as well as on this side. But presently the man will meet with an astral helper, or some other dead person who has been more sensibly instructed, and will learn from him that there is no cause for fear, and that there is a rational life to be lived in this new world, just as there was in the old.

He will find by degrees that there is very much that is new, as well as much that is a counterpart of what he already knows; for in this astral world thoughts and

desires express themselves in visible forms, though they are composed mostly of the finer matter of the plane. These become more and more prominent as his astral life proceeds and as he withdraws further and further into himself. As time passes, he pays less and less attention to the lower matter which forms the counterparts of physical objects, and is occupied more and more with that higher matter of which thought-forms are built—so far, that is, as thought-forms appear on the astral plane at all. So his life becomes more and more a life in a world of thought, and the counterpart of the world which he has left fades from his view—not that he has changed his location in space, but that his interest is shifting its centre. His desires still persist, and the forms surrounding him will be very largely the expression of these desires, and whether his life is one of happiness or discomfort will depend chiefly upon the nature of these.

The whole astral life after death is a constant and steady process of withdrawal by the ego into himself, and when in course of time the soul reaches the limit of that plane, he dies to it in just the same way as he died to the physical plane. That is to say, he casts off the body of that plane and leaves it behind him, passing on to the higher and still fuller life of the heaven-world.

Q. What are the surroundings of the astral world ?

Ans. To a large extent people make their own surroundings there. The astral world, as explained in Chapter II, is divided into seven subdivisions. These fall into three classes; and counting from the highest, subdivisions one, two and three form one class, and four, five and six another, the seventh standing alone. As explained before, though these subdivisions interpenetrate freely, the matter of the higher subdivisions is found on the whole at

a greater elevation above the surface of the earth than the bulk of the matter of the lower subdivisions. Thus though any person on that plane can move on it anywhere, his natural tendency is to float at a level corresponding to the specific gravity of the heaviest matter in his astral body. A man who has not permitted the rearrangement in his astral body can float anywhere at will, but the man who has submitted to that rearrangement is confined to only one level, not because he cannot rise to the highest or sink to the lowest, but because he is able to sense clearly only that subplane, the matter of which at that time happens to be on the outermost of the concentric shells of his astral body.

The lowest or seventh subplane, the astral slum with its gloomy and depressing atmosphere below the surface of the earth, is the most hideous and repulsive, and is populated by the scum of humanity—murderers, ruffians, drunkards and profligates—floating in darkness and cut off from the other dead, though only those are conscious there who are guilty of brutal crimes or deliberate cruelty or possessed of evil appetites. Persons of a generally better type, *i.e.*, suicides who had sought self-murder to escape the penalties of crimes, are also found there.

Subdivisions four, five and six may be said to be the astral double of the physical. The great majority of people make some stay on the sixth which is simply like physical life minus the physical body and its necessities, while the fifth and fourth are merely etherealised copies of the sixth, and life is less material there.

The first, second and third levels, though occupying the same space, give the idea of being much further removed from the physical, as men inhabiting them lose

sight of the earth and its belongings and are deeply self-absorbed.

The third region is the summerland of the spiritualists where the dead, by the power of their thought, call into existence schools and churches and temples, houses and cities, or beautiful scenery like pleasant flower-gardens, lovely lakes and magnificent mountains. These are mere collective creations of thought, but people live there contented for years.

The second section is the material heaven of the ignorantly orthodox, the habitat of the selfish or unspiritual religionist who wears here his golden crown and worships his own grossly material representation of the particular deity of his time and country. It is the happy hunting-ground of the Red Indian, the Valhalla of the Norseman, the houri-filled paradise of the Muslim, the golden jewelled-gated new Jerusalem of the Christian, the lyceum-filled heaven of the materialistic reformer.

The first or the highest region is occupied by intellectual men and women pronouncedly materialistic, or wanting to gain knowledge by physical modes of study, from motives of selfish ambition or for the sake of intellectual exercise. Many politicians, statesmen and men of science are to be found there.

The astral life is the result of all feelings which have in them the element of self. If they have been directly selfish, they bring their owner into conditions of great unpleasantness in the astral world ; if, though tinged with thoughts of self, they have been good and kindly, they bring him a comparatively pleasant though still limited astral life. Such of his thoughts and feelings as have been entirely unselfish produce their result in his life in the mental world ; therefore that life in the mental world

cannot be other than blissful. The astral life, which the man has made either miserable or comparatively joyous for himself, corresponds to what Christians call purgatory ; while the lower mental life, which is always entirely happy, is what is called heaven.

Q. Then is there no hell ?

Ans. Man makes for himself his own purgatory or heaven, which are not places, but only states of consciousness. Hell does not exist and is only a figment of the theological imagination. The ordinary belief of the Christian in eternal fire and everlasting punishment is nothing but a peculiarly pernicious superstition taught by the mediæval monks. The only thing which, from the Christian point of view, ought to be of any importance is what the Christ Himself said on the subject. There are eight passages in which He is supposed to mention eternal punishment, and every one of these eight instances can be quite plainly shown to have nothing to do with the popular idea which is attributed to them. There is a book called *Salvator Mundi*, written by a Christian clergyman, the Rev. Sandal Cox, who goes very carefully into the original Greek of what the Christ is alleged to have said, and explains what the Christ did mean, and gives the other words which He must have used, if speaking in Greek, in order to fit in with the popular interpretation. He had not meant what people usually think He meant. That shows that there is no rational basis for the belief in everlasting punishment, and of course one can refute it also from many other points of view. One can say that if there be a God, and if He be a loving Father, the cruelty of eternal punishment with its apparent injustice is absolutely impossible.

Still there comes a period in human development, though not for millions of years yet—the so-called Day of Judgment in the middle of the Fifth Round—when the young soul or the man who has set himself steadily against evolutionary progress does drop out, not into an everlasting hell, but into a condition of comparatively suspended animation in which he awaits the advent of another ~~cycle~~ of evolution which offers him, in its earlier stages, an opportunity of advancement more within the limits of his feeble capacities.

He is simply in the position of a child who has been unable to keep pace with his classmates. He cannot work with them through the later and more difficult portion of the course of study appointed for the year, so he must wait until, at the beginning of the next school-year, another set of boys are commencing the studies which he failed to grasp. By joining them, and thus going over the same ground once more, he is enabled to succeed where previously he succumbed to the difficulties of the path. This is all that it means, and may be called æonian condemnation ; for that is the real translation of the words which have been so grossly misinterpreted “eternal damnation”. It is not a damnation at all, not even a condemnation in any bad sense : it is simply a suspension for the present æon or dispensation. But the diseased imagination of the mediæval monk, always seeking the opportunity to introduce grotesquely aggravated horrors into his creed in order to terrify an incredibly ignorant peasantry into more liberal donations for the support of Mother Church, distorted this perfectly simple idea of “æonian suspension” into “eternal damnation”.

Still a man by living foolishly may make for himself an unpleasant and long-enduring purgatory, though neither

heaven nor hell can be eternal, as a finite cause can produce only a finite result.

Q. What, then, are the conditions severally, in Kāmaloka, or the astral world, of a very bad man, an ordinary man, and a man with some rational interests ?

Ans. The conditions of after-death life are almost infinite in their variety. Every ordinary man who has allowed the rearrangement in his astral body after death has to pass through the seven subdivisions in turn, though every one is not conscious in all of them. An ordinary decent person has not in his body sufficient matter of the lowest subplane to form a heavy shell. He usually has matter of the sixth mixed with a little of the seventh, and so after death he ordinarily finds himself viewing the counterpart of the physical world.

But a drunkard or a sensualist who has been in the grip of a lust strong enough, during physical life, to overpower reason and feelings of decency or family affection, finds himself after death in the lowest subdivision of the astral world, for his longings had been such as needed a physical body for their gratification. Such a craving manifests itself as a vibration in the astral body, and while he was still in the physical world, most of its strength was used up in setting in motion the heavy physical particles. But being in the astral world without the physical vehicle to deaden and retard the force of the desire-vibrations, he feels the appetite perhaps a hundred times more strongly, yet is absolutely unable to satisfy it for want of a physical body ; and then life is a real hell, the only hell there is. Yet he is reaping the perfectly natural result of his own action and no external power is punishing him. Here most of the suffering results from the non-satisfaction of vicious desires strengthened and encouraged

while in the physical body; the sinner is his own executioner. All this was perfectly well known in the ancient world, even among the Greeks, by whom it is clearly imaged in the myth of Tantalus, who suffered always from a raging thirst, yet was doomed forever to see the water recede just as it was about to touch his lips.

A murderer, living through the scenes of the murder and the subsequent events over and over again in Kāmaloka, ever repeating his diabolical act and going through the terrors of his arrest and execution, is experiencing hell indeed; fire and brimstone are mere stage properties in comparison. In many cases the murderer, while going over and over again in thought the crime which he has committed, will, by such ceaseless round of half malevolent, half horror-stricken meditation, produce something in the nature of a haunting at the scene of his violent deed.

But none of these conditions are eternal and none are punitive. They are the inevitable working out of causes set in motion in the physical world, and conditions only last while their causes endure. In course of time the force of desire wears out, but only at the cost of terrible suffering to the man, and as in the astral world time can be measured by means of sensations alone, there being no other time-measure such as we have in the physical world, each day seems to him somewhat like a thousand years. The blasphemous idea of eternal damnation seems to be a distortion of this fact.

The fate of Sisyphus of Greek mythology typifies exactly the after-life of the man of worldly ambition. The former was condemned forever to roll a heavy rock up to the summit of a mountain, only to see it roll down again the moment success seemed within his reach. The man

of selfish ambition has all his life been in the habit of forming selfish plans, and hence he continues to do so in the astral world ; he carefully builds up the plan till it is perfect in his mind, and only then finds out that he has lost the physical body which is necessary for its achievement. Down falls his hope ; yet so ingrained is the habit that he continues again and again to roll this same stone up the same mountain of ambition until such time as the vice is completely worn out. Then at last he realises that he need not roll up his rock, and he lets it rest in peace at the bottom of the hill.

Now take the case of an ordinary colourless man who has no particular vice, but who is still attached to things of the physical world—who has had no ideas beyond gossip or what is called sport, who has thought of nothing beyond his business or his dress, and whose life has been devoted merely to making money or to aimless social functions. The astral world is a place of weariness for him, because the things he craves for are not possible to him as there are no business engagements in that world, and no conventionalities upon which society in the physical world is based.

Yet for all but a very small minority, the state after death is happier than the life upon earth, since it is no longer needful to earn a living. The astral body feels neither hungry nor cold, nor suffers from disease, and each man in the astral world, by the mere exercise of his thought, clothes himself as he wishes. For the first time since early childhood the man is entirely free to spend the whole of his time in doing exactly what he likes.

Men with similar tastes and pursuits drift naturally together there just as they do on the physical plane, and there is no lack of profitable occupation for a man with

rational interests, provided they do not need a physical body for their expression. A lover of the beauties of nature can travel rapidly, about a hundred miles per second, without fatigue, to the loveliest spots in the world ; another delighting in art has the world's masterpieces at his disposal, while a student of science has libraries and laboratories of the world open to him. He can visit all scientific men and catch their thoughts. For a man who during earth-life has learnt to delight in unselfish actions and to work for the good of others, this world will be one of the most vivid joy and the most rapid progress. To a man who is both intelligent and helpful, who understands the conditions of this non-physical existence and takes the trouble to adapt himself to them, it opens a splendid vista of opportunities alike for acquiring fresh knowledge and for doing useful work. In fact, he may do more good in a few years of that astral existence than ever he could have done in the longest physical life. Thus there are ample possibilities both for enjoyment and progress there.

Q. What of the after-death conditions of those who die by accident or who have committed suicide ?

Ans. In the first class, there is a great variety ; in the second, the definite life-period has to be lived out. It is the period fixed for the working out of the karma of that life as already explained in Chapter V in connection with the exact time and manner of a man's death.

When death is by accident, it is not infrequently the ending planned by the Lords of Karma for that incarnation ; but sometimes it is not so intended, and the accident is therefore an interference by new forces brought to bear on the life—an exercise of initiative by the individual himself (when he chooses to pay a debt, before it is due,

as stated before,) or by others whose actions directly affect him. In such a case, the disturbed plan will be adjusted in the beginning of the next life, so that there will not be in the end anything lost to the soul whose destiny has been changed for the moment by himself or by others. But in no case is suicide ever in the plan of a man's life; for such an act the man is directly responsible, though that responsibility may also be shared by others.

In the case of those who die either from old age or disease, the hold of earthly desires is sure to be more or less weakened, and probably the very grossest particles are already got rid of, so that the man will most likely find himself on the sixth or fifth—or perhaps even a higher—subdivision of the astral plane; the principles have gradually been prepared for separation, and the shock is therefore not great.

But in the case of accidental death or suicide none of these preparations have taken place, and the withdrawal of the principles from their physical encasement has been very aptly compared to the tearing of the stone out of an unripe fruit; a great deal of the grossest kind of astral matter still clings around the personality, which is consequently held in the seventh or lowest subdivision of the plane.

The victims of sudden death whose earth-lives have been noble and pure have no affinity for this plane, and so the time of their sojourn upon it is passed either in "happy ignorance and full oblivion, or in a state of quiet slumber, a sleep full of rosy dreams". But if their earth-lives have been low and brutal, selfish and sensual, they will, like the suicides, be conscious to the fullest extent in this undesirable region, and are liable to develop into terribly evil entities.

The ordinary suicide is committed either from weakness or cowardice—due to a momentary despair, or a shock which the person is not strong enough to bear, or a sudden misfortune coming upon him from some wrong action which he fears will be discovered and the penalty of which he wishes to escape. It is sometimes the deliberate, but often the hurried, action of a man who is trying to get out of a trouble and escape from it.

Yet he *cannot* escape from it. When he has struck away his body, he is wide awake on the other side of death, exactly the same man as he was a moment before, except that his physical body is thrown off ; he is no more changed than if he had merely taken off his coat. The thing which drove him to suicide was mental or emotional, as the case may be. He has not got rid either of his mind or his emotions. All that part of him that drove him to suicide is there ; it was not a mere bodily action. The result of his losing the physical body is that his capacity for suffering is very much increased. He is subject to the same forces as those which may have driven him to suicide. There is, however, one peculiarity in relation to it, that he generally goes through “in imagination,” as we call it, all that led up to the point when he killed himself, repeats automatically the feelings of despair and fear which preceded the self-murder, and goes through the act and death-struggle with ghastly persistence.

That curious automatic effect, the repeating of a thing over and over again in Kāmaloka, is also a characteristic of the murderer when he passes over, as mentioned above, whether the murder is found out or not. Of course if he is found out and hanged, then it takes place in rapid sequence. That is also one of the ways in which the savage learns that murder is wrong. In his case, it

cannot be said to be much of a crime as he kills without thinking; yet he has to learn that murder is a thing he must not do. So, in the post-mortem life, he has a short suffering of this kind, short because there was very little mental effort behind, and because there was merely the sudden emotion, leading to the commission of that action. That is part of the useful instruction which helps in the evolution of the savage: he learns that murder is wrong by finding that it works out painfully for him. But of course those who are more evolved would suffer for a very much longer period if they committed a similar offence.

The folly in suicide is that people erroneously expect to escape life, and then they find themselves still alive. That is the futility of the whole thing. Suicide depends chiefly upon ignorance. If people be convinced that they cannot escape, that the results of actions are inevitable, that will work upon their minds when there is a sudden impulse to suicide from the desire to escape. They cannot escape, but, on the contrary, fall, as it were, from the frying-pan into the fire; they have to suffer there more than on the physical plane, because they are working in subtler matter, in which the impact of feeling, owing to less of wastage in moving the light astral matter, is stronger in its effect upon consciousness than on the physical plane.

The suicide is very apt to turn up at a spiritualistic séance. He may be induced by the people who try to help him on the other side of death, to accept the inevitable results of his action patiently and quietly; but often he rejects the good advice and attempts to regain a hold upon life by wrongful means. Such a man—as well as a victim of sudden death whose earth-life has been brutal, selfish and sensual—inflamed with all kinds of

horrible appetites which he can no longer satisfy now that he is without a physical body, often tries to gratify his earthly yearnings and loathsome passions vicariously through a living proxy—a medium or any sensitive person—whom he can obsess. Unfortunately if he succeeds in doing so, he is enabled to prolong enormously his dreadful astral life and to renew for perhaps an indefinite period his power to generate evil karma and so prepares for himself a future incarnation of the most degraded character, besides running the risk of losing a large portion of such mind-power as he may happen to possess. But if he is fortunate enough *not* to meet with a sensitive through whom his passions can be vicariously gratified, the unfulfilled desires will gradually burn themselves out, and the suffering caused in the process will probably go far towards working off the evil karma of the past life.

But it must be remembered that the guilt of suicide differs considerably according to circumstances, from the morally blameless act of Seneca or Socrates, or from a suicide which has been committed from a noble motive and is an act of love and self-sacrifice, through all degrees down to the heinous crime of the wretch who takes his own life in order to escape from the entanglements into which his villany has involved him; and of course the position after death varies accordingly.

Q. If there is no hell, what is the use of so much terrible suffering in the astral world? How does the system of purgation help the man?

Ans. There is no hell, no senseless, useless eternity of torment for the mere gratification of the cruel malignity of an irresponsible despot in which orthodox theology asks its devotees to believe; but there is a purgatory which is

simply the necessary, the only effective and therefore the most merciful process for the elimination of evil desires. Terrible though the suffering may be, any evil desire gradually wears itself out, and only when all evil desires have done so, can the man pass on into the higher life of the heaven-world.

Because a particular evil desire is burnt out, the man is definitely freed from it, and he need not take up the burden of it again in his next incarnation unless he wills it. Though the desire itself is dead, there still remains the same weakness of character which made it possible for him to succumb to it. In his next life he will be born with an astral vehicle containing such matter as is necessary for the expression of the same desire—with, so to speak, an outfit which would enable him to repeat his last life in that respect. He receives that matter because in his last incarnation he sought it and made use of it; but though he is provided with it this time, he is in no way bound to employ it in the same way as before. If from the result of his previous actions he should have the good fortune to find himself as a child in the hands of careful and capable parents, and so be trained to regard such a desire as evil, and to gain control over it and repress it as it appears, then the matter which would have expressed it will remain unvivified and gradually become atrophied for want of use, like many of our physical muscles.

The matter of the astral body is slowly but constantly wearing away and being replaced, precisely as is that of the physical body; and as that which is atrophied disappears, it will be replaced by matter of a more refined order which is incapable of responding to the strong, coarse vibrations of that grossly sensual desire, and thus that particular abomination will become impossible to him. He

will, in fact, have grown beyond it and finally conquered it, so that never again in all his long series of future lives will he repeat that mistake, for he has now built into his ego the opposite virtue of complete self-control as far as that vice is concerned. Through a life of successful struggle against that desire the victory over it has been won; and now there is no longer a struggle, for he sees the vice in its true colours and it has not the slightest attraction for him. Thus the suffering on the astral plane which once seemed, and was, so terrible to him, has been in reality a blessing in disguise, since through it he has been enabled to gain this immense moral victory, to take this decided step upon the path of evolution; and so far there seems no other method than that of suffering by which such splendid results could possibly have been achieved.

Q. If there be no hell, how do you explain the Christian doctrine of ' Salvation ' ?

Ans. Salvation (*L. Salvus*, saved) is not escape from eternal damnation or from the mythical hell. To be saved means really to be on the right side when a certain division of the human race takes place in the future, on the Day of Judgment, as mentioned before; that division has been described as the separation between the sheep and the goats, the saved and the lost. There cannot be any such idea as " the lost " in the whole of God's world, because God intends us all to evolve; and evolve we most certainly shall. But the question is whether we have attained individualisation early enough, and also whether we shall choose to go willingly along the path of evolution or whether we shall give ourselves and others a great deal of trouble by resisting the divine guidance.

That is the only meaning of salvation—that a man is sure to come out on the right side in that future

judgment—a decision as to whether he is or is not ready to go on in the higher and more evolved world. If he is not, he drops out and goes on with the next wave of evolution, like the child at school, mentioned before, who not being up to the level of his standard, is unable to go on to a higher class with his comrades but has to wait and do the same year's work over again.

As regards the progress that lies before us in this particular chain of worlds, the great majority of us are by no means yet what is technically called 'safe' or 'saved'. We reach that desirable position only when we have become members of the Great White Brotherhood which lasts from eternity to eternity, by passing the First Great Initiation as explained in Chapter X.

Those familiar with the Christian teaching will remember how the great Initiate, S. Paul, pointed out that it was the intention of the Christian religion to bring about the birth of the Christ within the individual believer, and that the Christ-child, thus born in the human spirit, was to grow and develop until the full stature of the Christ was reached in man. There is within each one of us a Christ principle, which as yet in most of us lies dormant; but it can be awakened, and the awakening of that Christ principle is the birth of the Christ within the heart of each man. We find in the Christian Scripture "Christ in you, the hope of glory," and it is the presence of that Christ principle within each heart that brings the hope of glory to every human soul. That principle is closely connected with the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, that Son of God who became incarnate, who descended into flesh and became Himself part of us in order that through Him we might rise to greater glory. Without that Christ principle we should indeed be lost, and belief in that true

Christ is necessary for salvation. As one Angelus Silesius in the seventeenth century has said :

“ Though Christ were yearly born in Bethlehem,
and never
Had birth in yourself, then were you lost for ever ;
And if within yourself it is not reared again,
The Cross at Golgotha can save you not from pain.”

And it is the belief, the certainty, that the Christ-power is within each one of us which will enable us to reach that stage of safety, and to live the life which we ought to live. In that sense it is true to say that belief in the Christ is necessary for salvation, but it is the Christ within ourselves in whom we must believe. Belief in the mere story of a life lived by the Christ on the physical plane cannot possibly affect our future. It is the knowledge of the Divine within man, and its power to respond to the Divine without, which will save us and help and strengthen us on our way.

“ We all may be
The Saviours of the world, if we believe
In the Divinity which dwells in us
And worship it.”

The birth of the Christ within the heart of man is a very real thing. In that sense we may truly say that the Christ is the Saviour of the World, for it is only then that man can attain that which God meant him to attain, and entering consciously into the glory and the fulness of the Christ Himself, realise the God within.

Thus the development of the Christ principle within us is necessary for escape from recurring births and deaths. As that principle unfolds, we realise that our separate consciousness is nothing but an illusion—that we are all one in God. And as we realise that Fatherhood of God, we realise also the true Brotherhood of Man.

That awakening of the Christ principle is also called the attainment of the Buddhic consciousness. Saints in their moments of bliss unconsciously touch the glory of that wonderful consciousness and realise the Christ within them. But there are others who set themselves deliberately and scientifically to gain this splendour and consciously enter into the glory and the fulness of the Christ, realising the God in man because they themselves are consciously part of that God whom they realise. That is the true birth of Christ within the heart of man. The true man, being a spark of the Divine Flame, is already divine and needs no salvation. All he wants is to be able to realise himself in all the worlds and at all possible levels and to be a channel of the Divine Power in the carrying out of the Divine Plan.

Among the eastern nations salvation carries the idea of the escape from sorrow and evil to the condition of being safe—the escape from repeated incarnations, from the wheel of birth and death, from what the schools of Orphism in the sixth century B.C. called the “Circle of Generation,” from what the Buddhists call the Sansāra, the Wheel of Life.

Q. On what factors does a man's detention in any section of the astral world depend? In what time and how does an ordinary man pass from the astral to the heaven-world?

Ans. The ego steadily withdraws all his forces into himself, leaving behind him section after section of astral matter. His detention in any section is in proportion to the amount of matter of that section present in his astral body, that proportion depending on the life lived, the desires indulged in and the kind of matter thus attracted and built into the body.

Therefore a man can, by pure living and high thinking, so minimise the quantity of matter belonging to the lower astral levels which he attaches to himself, and so raise it in each case to what may be called its critical point, that the first touch of disintegrating force would shatter its cohesion and resolve it into its original condition, leaving him free at once to pass on to the next sub-plane.

His attitude of mind after death also influences his stay there, as by understanding his position and fixing his attention on spiritual matters he can facilitate astral disintegration and cut short his sojourn on the lower levels.

In the case of a thoroughly spiritually-minded person who has purified his astral body with the constituents drawn from the finest grades of each division of astral matter, the condition of the critical stage, mentioned above, would be attained with reference to all the subdivisions of astral matter, and the result would be a practically instantaneous passage through that plane, so that consciousness would be recovered for the first time in the heaven-world. A less developed but pure and temperate man will pass through that plane less swiftly, though dreaming peacefully, unconscious of his surroundings, till having thrown off one astral shell after another he awakens in the heaven-world. Of course as stated before, the sub-planes interpenetrate one another and are not divided from one another in space, so when it is said that a person passes from one sub-division to another, it does not mean that he moves in space at all, but simply that the focus of his consciousness shifts from the outer shell to the one next within it.

The average time taken by different classes of persons in the astral world has been already given at the end of Chapter IV.

Finding himself in the sixth section, still hovering about the places and persons with which he was most closely connected while on earth, the average man, as time passes on, finds the earthly surroundings gradually growing dimmer and of less and less importance to him, and thenceforward tends more and more to mould his entourage into agreement with the more persistent of his thoughts. By the time that he reaches the third level he finds that this characteristic has entirely superseded the vision of the realities of the astral world.

When all the lower emotions and desires with the thoughts of a selfish nature have worn themselves out, and the ego with his steady process of withdrawal has passed even beyond the finest kind of astral matter, there comes a time when the astral body, not entirely disintegrated, is finally shaken off by an astral death, and the soul, except that of an unusually wicked man who has no spark of love or kindness for another or who has slipped into irredeemable sin and bestiality, has a kind of gestation period and sinks into a brief, peaceful, dreamy "predevachanic unconsciousness" to be awakened by a sense of intense bliss into that part of the heaven-world to which he belongs by his nature. There is not necessarily a movement in space, but the man's consciousness is now focussed into the lower mental world, where are found also those animals who, before death, became "individualised," and attained to the stature of a human soul.

Q. If death is not the end of life, but is only a step from one stage of life to another, what about the violent grief of those who mourn the loss of their departed dear ones?

Ans. Their grief is, as already explained, not for a real loss but an apparent one, the result of a delusion and

ignorance of nature's laws, and represents unnecessary suffering to the mourners themselves. The departed one is still with them, and while their physical bodies are asleep, they talk with him; but as soon as they are awake, they revert to the old delusion that they have lost him and think thoughts of sorrow all day long, making the dead man very miserable and unhappy in that emotional world.

Not only that, but uncontrolled grief and wild outbursts of sorrow produce a very painful effect on the departed one when he is sinking peacefully into the unconsciousness which precedes his awakening into the glory of the heaven-world. He is often aroused from his dreamy happiness into a remembrance of the last earth-life by the passionate sorrow and desires of his friends on earth, which awaken corresponding vibrations of sorrow with a hundredfold strength in his liberated desire-body, causing him great discomfort and depression, and very seriously delay his onward progress.

Again, this unrestricted grief of ignorant, though well-meaning, relations puts great obstacles in the way of astral helpers who try to help the dead by explaining to them the conditions of the astral world and to cheer and comfort them in their new surroundings.

Forgetfulness is not counselled, but the remembrance should take a form which is helpful and not harmful, and the selfish unavailing regret should be substituted by earnest and loving good wishes for perpetual light and eternal peace.

Q. Then have prayers for the dead any value? If so, how should they be offered?

Ans. Prayers always have value for the living as well as for the dead as they are dictated by love; but a

prayer is efficacious in proportion to the concentration of thought expressed in it, the purity and strength of the will by which it is directed to the person concerned, and the knowledge possessed by its utterer. A prayer, like a thought, creates a form, an artificial elemental, "an active beneficent power," which goes to the person for whose benefit it has been called into existence, and helps him as opportunity occurs. This energy expended on the astral plane can affect any person in the astral body, and a dead man can be helped and protected by such thought-forms so long as he remains in the astral world.

A man with knowledge, understanding the constitution of the astral body and the power of thought, can enormously increase his aid by deliberately sending an artificial elemental to assist in the disintegration of the astral shells which imprison the soul, and thus help the quickening of his passage towards Devachan. Some of the mantras of the Hindu Shrâddhas (ceremonies for the dead) have this object in view and are very efficacious when employed by a holy and wise man.

But the ordinary man knows so little of the condition of the dear ones who have passed away, that he might well fear to set in motion a force which might be ill-directed for want of more exact knowledge of their need. Such a one cannot do better than use that beautiful antiphon which appears so often in the services for the dead by the Christian Catholic Church: "Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon him." For its two clauses express exactly the conditions which are most desirable for the dead; first, perfect rest from all earthly thought and care, so that his progress towards the heaven-world may be undisturbed; and secondly, the perpetual

light of divine love shining clearly upon him through the higher and more spiritual part of his own nature, drawing him ever upward towards itself, so that his progress may be rapid. Truly the earth has little more of assistance to give to a man for whom such a prayer is being earnestly and constantly offered. In this way anyone can help his dead friends or dear ones by raising himself to a higher level—forgetting himself and the delusion of his apparent loss—sending thoughts of “perpetual light and eternal peace,” and substituting selfish and unavailing regret by earnest and loving good wishes for their swift progress from the astral to the heavenly world.

Q. Can we do anything to help a person about to die? If so, how and when?

Ans. We can certainly do a great deal to help him. If we have access to him physically during his illness, we can explain to him the conditions after death, and a rational explanation of these with a confident and cheery talk about the life beyond the grave will greatly relieve his mind.

If, however, physical communication is impossible, the dying man can be acted upon from the astral plane. One should fix the intention of aiding that particular person in his mind before going to sleep with arguments to be presented. The main object of the helper is to calm and encourage the sufferer and induce him to realise that death is a perfectly natural process, and to explain to him the nature of the astral plane and the preparations necessary for progress towards the heaven-world.

The helper himself must have the qualifications of single-mindedness in the work of helping, perfect self-control over his temper and nerves, perfect calmness, serenity and joyousness, knowledge of higher planes and

unselfishness with a heart filled with love—if he would help effectively the dying and the dead.

The dead may be unconscious after death for a moment or a few minutes, hours, days, or even weeks, and though a trained person can observe it for himself, an untrained man should be ready to help several successive nights in order not to fail when the dead man regains his consciousness on the astral plane.

Q. Shall we meet our loved ones who have passed on before us ?

Ans. Assuredly we shall, for the attraction will act as a magnet and draw us together. If the loved one has died recently, we shall find him on the astral plane ; but if he has left this earth long ago, he may have passed the astral and entered the heaven-world ; and when we ourselves reach that world, we shall have him with us, always at his best, through our thought-form or mental image, vivified by the ego of that friend, as will be explained presently. Those whom we have loved are not lost ; the reunion is sure where affection exists, as love is one of the mightiest powers of the universe, whether in life or in death.

Q. Why is sudden death injurious to a man, and what is the reason of the old prayer of the Church : " From sudden death, good Lord, deliver us " ?

Ans. The condition of a man's life after death depends, firstly, on the length of time he stays on any subplane, and secondly, on the amount of his consciousness upon it, while the length of time on any subplane depends on the matter of that subplane built into the body. Thus both the factors of the post-mortem existence depend not on the nature of death, but on the nature of life lived, and no accident can affect the man.

Still, though a sudden death does not necessarily affect a man's position in the astral world for the worse, it does nothing to improve it. The slow wasting away of the aged or the ravages of lingering disease invariably loosen and break up the astral particles, and wear out most of the lower desires, so that when a man recovers his consciousness on the astral plane, much of his work there is already done for him by the particles belonging to the lower levels already having been burnt out of him, whereas a victim of sudden death having a much stronger astral body to manage may have his residence slightly prolonged on the lowest level of the astral plane. At the same time, if he learns to use that life well, it may be productive of much more good karma than what he would have been able to make in the same time on the physical plane, so that there are always two sides of the account to take into consideration.

Again, the mental terror and agitation in a sudden death often persist after death and are not favourable preparations for astral life. At our present stage of evolution we often spend almost or even quite the entire night in revolving and considering the last definite thought in our mind before we go to sleep. Similarly, the last thought in the mind before death is not unimportant, especially in the case of an undeveloped person with vague and inchoate astral consciousness, as his last thought would occupy his mind for a long time, and would to some extent set the keynote to which a good deal of his astral life might be tuned. Thus it would be worth while taking some trouble to see that it is a good one ; but this is not possible in the case of sudden death. Of course, in the case of ordinarily evolved and intelligent people it would be the general tone

of the mind—the general trend of their thought—during earth-life that would give the key to its probable working during astral life, and the particular idea which occupied it at the moment of transition from one state to the other would not matter much.

Q. Is the astral world inhabited by others besides the dead ?

Ans. The astral world is inhabited not only by the dead, but also by about one-third of the living who have temporarily left their physical bodies during sleep. Astral matter being very plastic under the influence of thought, a man appears in the astral world in the likeness of himself, wearing the clothes of which he thinks. It is likewise the dwelling-place of Adepts and Their pupils, of psychically developed persons not under the guidance of a Master, and of black magicians and their chelas.

That world has also a great number of other human inhabitants without physical bodies, some considerably above human level, like Nirmānakāyās, pupils of Masters awaiting reincarnation, etc., and some below, like astral shades and shells of the dead, shells vitalised for black magic, dead black magicians and their pupils, etc.

Non-human beings like the astral elemental essence of our evolution and astral bodies of animals also find their place there ; while nature-spirits of various kinds called fairies, elves, brownies, fauns, satyrs, goblins, etc., having a different line of evolution and usually wearing a miniature human form, as well as Devas or angels far higher in evolution than man, form a large part of its population.

Again, it is the habitat of artificial entities, the elementals formed unconsciously by ordinary men and consciously by Adepts and black magicians, as well as of human artificials employed in spiritualistic séances.

Thus we are neither the only nor the principal inhabitants of the astral world, as that world is largely inhabited by beings of other lines of evolution running parallel with our own, which, though they pass through a level corresponding to that of humanity, do not pass through humanity at all.

The inhabitants of the astral world have their senses normally capable of responding to the undulations of their own world only. A man living in the physical world sees, hears, feels, by vibrations connected with the physical matter around him. He is equally surrounded by the astral and mental and other worlds which are interpenetrating his own denser world. But he is normally unconscious of them because his senses cannot respond to the oscillations of their matter, just as our physical eyes cannot respond to the vibrations of ultra-violet light. A being living in the astral world might be occupying the very same space as a being living in the physical world, yet each would be entirely unconscious of the other and would in no way impede the free movement of the other. The same is true of all the other worlds. We are all along surrounded by the worlds of finer matter, as close to us as the world we see, and their inhabitants are passing through us and about us, but we are entirely unconscious of them.

Q. What becomes of the astral corpse after the man passes on to Devachan ?

Ans. A man at death separates himself completely from the physical body, but an ordinary man identifies himself closely with his lower desires during life and thus allows the lower Manas to be so entangled with Kāma, that the ego with all his indrawing force cannot separate himself completely from it. So when the man finally breaks away from the partially disintegrated astral body,

he leaves behind a part of the Manas, imprisoned in and entangled with the desire-body. This fragmentary entity, called a shade, has thus a certain vitality, and moving freely in the astral world with past memories, fragmentary consciousness and tendencies to repeat automatically familiar vibrations of love, desires and thought without intelligence, is often mistaken for the man himself by the ignorant at séances.

At a later stage—in a few hours, or in a few months or years, according to the spiritual or material nature of the ego who has passed on into the heaven-world—the fragmentary consciousness dies out of the astral body, though it does not return to the ego to whom it belonged, and then the astral corpse without any trace of its former life, now called a shell, slowly disintegrates in the astral world as did the physical body in its own world.

Q. What then becomes of the man when he passes on to Devachan or heaven?

Ans. Devachan—the abode of the gods, or the place of light or bliss—is a specially guarded part of the mental world from which sorrow and evil are kept away by the action of certain Devas.

It is not really a place but a state of consciousness, and is here round us at this very moment, as near to us as the air we breathe.

After his second death in the astral world the man awakens to a new glory of life and colour, and lives in the radiant mental body in the heaven-world. He awakens gradually to a sense of joy unspeakable and bliss indescribable, softest melodies breathing round him, his being suffused with light, and the faces loved on earth dawning through the golden haze.

Every ordinary man is, during earth-life, surrounding himself with a mass of thought-forms, those representing the main interest of his life growing strong and remaining with him even after death. The force of the selfish thought-forms, of anger, ambition, pride, greed, gluttony, drunkenness, sensuality, etc., pours down into astral matter and is exhausted in the astral world when the man is burning that lower part of his nature in that purgatorial life. But his unselfish thoughts, whether purely intellectual or of the nature of love, compassion, tenderness, devotion, etc., belong to his mental body, and these he carries with him into Devachan, as he can appreciate the heaven-world only through these refined thoughts.

Now his mental body is a vehicle which is by no means fully developed like the astral, and it shuts him out from the mental world about him instead of enabling him to see it, as only those parts of his mental body are in full working order which he had used in an altruistic manner in his earth-life. The high, refined thoughts and noble, unselfish aspirations which he poured out during earth-life then cluster round him and make a sort of shell about him, through the medium of which he can respond to certain types of vibrations in the refined matter of the mental world.

These thoughts surrounding him are the powers by which he draws upon the wealth of the heaven-world ; and though that world is a store-house of infinite extent—all glory and beauty conceivable—he can draw upon it just according to his power of unselfish thoughts. Each such thought-form is a window through which he looks out from his mental body upon the glory and beauty of the mental world. If he has chiefly regarded physical things during

his earth-life, then he has made for himself but few windows through which this higher glory can shine upon him. An utterly unselfish and highly evolved soul is all windows—has full consciousness here, can move about in his mental vehicle as freely as the ordinary man employs his physical body, and through it survey vast fields of higher knowledge lying open to him. Yet every man will have had some touch of pure, unselfish feeling, even if it were but once in all his life, and that will be a window for him now. Every man, except the utter savage at a very early stage, will as surely have something of this wondrous life of bliss. Therefore as a matter of fact, instead of some men going to heaven and some to hell, most men have their share both of purgatory and heaven, and it is only their relative proportions which differ.

To think a loving or noble thought, to appreciate a fine writer or a lovely work of art in the physical world, is to open a window into the heaven-world ; to make a habit of high, unselfish thought is to keep that window always wide open. But the condition of a man in the heaven-world is chiefly receptive, and his vision of anything outside his own shell of thought is of the most limited character ; he cannot build a new window along new lines of activity if he took no interest in these during his physical life. There are many directions which the higher thought may take, some of them personal, like affection to a person or devotion to a personal deity, and some impersonal. Among the latter are art, music and philosophy, and a man whose interest lay along any of these lines finds both measureless enjoyment and unlimited instruction waiting for him—that is, the amount of enjoyment and instruction is limited only by his power of perception. Like a labourer returning home with his earnings of the

day, the man draws from Devachan as much as he has prepared himself to take by his efforts during earthly life.

On this plane exists the infinite fulness of the Divine Mind, open in all its limitless affluence to every soul, just in proportion as that soul has qualified himself to receive. It is a world whose power of response to a man's aspirations is limited only by his capacity to aspire. In the East it is said that each man brings his own cup, of which some are large and some small, but each cup, large or small, is filled to its utmost capacity ; the sea of bliss holds far more than enough for all.

Q. Then has not every one the same kind of heaven, or the same intensity of bliss there ?

Ans. The mental images (or thought-forms) of unselfish thoughts which had stayed like seeds in the mental body begin to manifest like trees in Devachan, so that when a man has formed many mental images through aspiration for knowledge or unselfish desire to help humanity, though those images had then looked like castles in the air in the physical world, they now materialise in the finer matter of the mental world, and the man sees himself doing there everything according to his desire.

Mental matter being more subtle than physical matter, thoughts are things in the mental or heaven-world, and by the power of thought every one in heaven creates his own world according to his desires. As are a man's thoughts, so is his Devachan, and the thoughts of no two persons being alike, their heavens also must differ accordingly. Still every one finding himself each moment exactly according to his desire, all are extremely happy though enjoying different degrees of bliss.

Again, if the joys of heaven were of one particular type only, as the orthodox theory holds, there would

always be some who would soon get weary owing to their inability to participate in those joys, through want of taste in that particular direction or from lack of necessary education. Thus one man's heaven cannot be imposed on all, as a slum-child cannot be happy in the glorious surroundings of the artist, and what gives happiness to one may not give any happiness at all to another. As it is, each one creates his own heaven by his thought-forms, by selection from the ineffable splendours of the Thought of God Himself. He decides for himself both the length and the character of his heaven-life by the causes which he himself generates during his earth-life; therefore he cannot but have exactly the amount which he has deserved, and exactly the quality of joy which is best suited to his idiosyncrasies. Thus this is the only imaginable arrangement which can make every one happy to the fullest extent of his capacity for happiness.

Q. What happens to children in the heaven-world?

Ans. Of all those who enter that world, children are the happiest and the most entirely at home. They do not lose the parents, the brothers, the sisters or the playmates whom they love; it is simply that they have them to play with during what we call the night instead of the day; so that they have no feeling of loss or separation. During our day they are never left alone, for, in that world as in this, children gather together and play together—play in Elysian fields full of rare delights and are always full of joy and often even riotously happy.

Even those children whose thoughts turn more naturally to religious matters never fail to find that for which they long. For the angels and saints of old exist and are not mere pious fancies; and those who believe in them and need them are surely drawn to them and find

them more kindly and glorious than ever fancy dreamed. Yet even those who would find God Himself—God in material form—are not disappointed; for from the gentlest and the kindest teachers they learn that all forms are God's forms, for He is everywhere, and those who would serve and help even the lowest of His creatures are truly serving and helping Him. As children like to be useful, a wide field for help and comfort lies before them in their errands of mercy and love among the ignorant in that higher world.

We should have no fear for the tiny babies who are as yet too young to play; for many a dead mother waits eagerly to clasp them to her breast, to receive and love them as though they were her own. Usually such little ones rest in the spiritual world but a short time, as stated before, and return to earth once more, often to the very same father and mother.

Q. How do we find our friends and dear ones in the heaven-world?

Ans. If a man loves another with deep unselfish love, he makes a strong thought-form or mental image of that friend or relative, and naturally takes that image to the heaven-world with him, as it is to that level of matter that such love belongs in virtue of its unselfishness. The force of such love is strong enough to act on the ego of the friend in the higher part of the mental body, because it is the ego or the soul that a man loves in unselfish love, not the physical body. Now the ego of the friend feeling this vibration at once makes a response and pours himself into the thought-form created by the Devachani. So the man's friend is truly present with him very vividly, and it does not matter whether that friend be living or dead; for the appeal is made, not to the fragment of the friend which is

sometimes imprisoned in a physical body, but to the ego who can thus simultaneously respond to the affection of even a hundred friends, as no number of representations on a lower level can exhaust the fulness of the ego, any more than any number of lines can make a square, or any number of squares a cube.

Thus every man in the heaven-world will always have around him all the friends and relatives he wishes to have, and they are with him always at their best, as they are then two stages nearer the reality than in the limitations of the physical world.

The same remarks hold good if a man was inspired by devotion to a personal deity. The deity is always present with the dead man even more vividly than on the physical plane.

Q. But does a dead man in heaven wait for and watch his friends and dear ones on earth below ?

Ans. No. How could the dead man be happy in heaven if he looked back and saw his dear ones in sorrow or in the commission of sin, say, his wife grieving for his loss, or, worse still, marrying another shortly afterwards ?

The case of waiting is scarcely better, for then he will have a long wearisome period of waiting, often extending to years, while again the friend may arrive so very much changed as to be no longer sympathetic. But according to the arrangement provided by nature, these difficulties are all avoided, and those whom the man loved are ever with him and always at their noblest and best, while no discord or change can come between them since he receives from them all the time exactly what he wishes.

Q. If a soul spends so much of his time in Devachan between two incarnations, what are his opportunities of development during that stay ?

Ans. 1. Through qualities in himself he has opened corresponding windows in the heaven-world, and by continued exercise of those qualities for a long time he will greatly strengthen them and return to earth richly dowered in that respect. Thoughts being intensified by reiteration, a man spending hundreds of years in pouring out unselfish affection will certainly know how to love strongly and well. Devachan is a life of assimilation, and the thought-forms of aspirations or of mental and moral experiences gathered on earth are worked in the texture of the soul as mental and moral faculties, and become the powers and qualities, capacities and tendencies, for his next life on earth.

2. Through his aspirations he will come into contact with some of the great orders of spirits and learn much from them. For example, he may learn marvellous new combinations in music from the Gāndharvas—a great order of Angels who are especially devoted to music.

3. He will gain additional information and instruction through the mental images made of others, if these people themselves are sufficiently developed to be able to teach him. One having a strong image of the Master will thus get definite teaching and help through it.

Q. *Are there seven different heavens as is ordinarily believed, and does a man pass through all these successively as in the case of the astral plane?*

Ans. As explained in Chapter II there are seven subdivisions in the mental as in the astral world. The three highest, the Arupa Loka or Formless levels, are the habitat of the ego in the causal body, while the four lower ones, the Rupa Loka, form the heaven where the man passes his heaven-life in the mental body.

There being nothing in the mental body corresponding to the redistribution of the astral matter, a man does not pass through the successive stages or regions of the heaven-world one after another as is done in the astral world, but is drawn to the level which corresponds most closely to the degree of his development, and spends his whole life there in the mental body.

The dominant characteristic of the lowest or seventh subdivision is unselfish family affection, all selfish tinges being required to be worked out on the astral plane. The sixth has the characteristic of anthropomorphic religious devotion, while the fifth has that of devotion expressing itself in work of some sort. All the above three subdivisions are concerned with the working of devotion to personalities, either to family, friend or personal deity.

The fourth section has for its dominant note the wider devotion to humanity, which includes activities connected with unselfish pursuit of spiritual knowledge, high philosophy or scientific thought, unselfish literary or artistic ability, and service for the love of service.

At the end of the heaven-life, which lasts for different periods as explained in Chapter IV, the mental body in its turn drops away as the others have done, and the man's life in the causal body begins.

Q. What happens to the man in the higher heaven—the three higher subplanes of the mental world—in his causal body at the end of his heaven-life in the lower mental world?

Ans. All the mental faculties which express themselves on the lower levels are drawn into the causal body with all the germs of passional life which were drawn into the mental body from the astral at the time of leaving the astral shell, and the Thinker having finished a round of

his pilgrimage dwells for a time in his own native land. Here the soul needs no windows as all the walls have fallen away ; but the majority of men, having only a dim consciousness of their surroundings at this height, rest there for a short time, scarcely awake, yet assimilating the small results of the closed earth-life. Still, with development, the life of the man on the formless level becomes longer, richer and deeper as his causal body grows bigger and better organised, and he returns to earth-life with greater knowledge and more effective power to help himself and others.

On the highest subplane live the Masters or Adepts and Their higher pupils ; on that next below, the souls whose higher evolution is attested by their inborn culture and natural refinement when in earthly bodies ; and on the third subplane, the vast majority of the sixty thousand millions of souls, spoken of before, who form the mass of our as yet backward humanity.

The length of a man's stay in the higher mental world depends on the stage of his evolution as well as on his deep thinking and noble living during earth-life, as described in Chapter IV.

Still, to every man, however unprogressed, there comes a moment of clear vision before his return to earth, when he sees his past life with the causes working from it into the future, and, glancing forward, he also sees the next incarnation that awaits him with its possibilities and opportunities. Then the clouds of matter close upon him and obscure his vision, and the cycle of another incarnation begins with the awakening of the powers of the lower mind through Tanhā, the blind thirst for manifested life, as already explained in Chapter IV on Reincarnation.

CHAPTER VII

THOUGHT-POWER, ITS ACTION AND USE

Question. What is thought and how does it show itself?

Answer. Thought is a change in consciousness corresponding to a mode of motion in the matter of the mental plane. There is Manas, the Thinker, who thinks or knows, and the mind is merely his instrument for obtaining knowledge, an organ of consciousness in its aspect as knower. We see objects when the light-ether is thrown into waves between those objects and our eye; when we think of an object, the thought-ether, *i.e.*, the matter of the mental plane, is thrown into waves between that object and our mind. Not only do we create these waves, but the waves of thoughts created by others also impinge on our mental body and modify the arrangement of its materials, and in concrete thinking we experience over again the impacts of the original thought-waves.

We have seen in Chapter III that man possesses a vehicle corresponding to each of the interpenetrating worlds of our solar system, that his astral body is the vehicle of his desires, passions and emotions, and that similarly his mental body is the vehicle for the expression of his thought. It is in the matter of the mental body that thought first shows itself as a vibration to clairvoyant sight—a vibration which produces various effects as

definite in their action upon the fine type of matter as is the power of steam or electricity over physical matter.

Only a few rich men can have steam or electrical power to do useful work, but every human being, rich or poor, young or old, has at his disposal a considerable proportion of the forces of the finer types of matter which respond to the influences of human thought and emotion. This power, though possessed by all, is intelligently used so far only by few. Possession brings responsibility with it, but most men are wrongly using this power through ignorance, and instead of thoroughly utilising these magnificent possibilities are unintentionally doing harm both to themselves and to others.

Q. What have the Scriptures of the different world-religions to say on the subject ?

Ans. "Thoughts alone cause the round of births," says a Hindu Scripture, "let a man strive to purify his thoughts ; what a man thinks on, that he becomes." "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he," says the wise King of Israel. "All that we are is made up of our thoughts," declared the Buddha. Purity (of thoughts, words and deeds) is the key-word of the Zoroastrian religion ; "Purity," it says, "is the greatest bliss," the purity of words and deeds being evidently dependent on that of thought. "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, *hath* committed adultery with her *already* in his heart," said the Christ. And again : "He who hateth his brother, *is* a murderer."

Thought is real in two senses, directly and indirectly. Everybody recognises the indirect action of thought, for it is obvious that a man must think before he can do anything, and thought is the motive power of the act just as water is the motive power of the mill. But people

generally do not know that thought has also a direct action on matter, and that whether or not a man translates his thought into deed or word, the thought has already produced its effect. Again, thought being the parent of action, a man can mould his character and therefore his destiny by the exercise of this power.

Q. What then are the effects of thought ?

Ans. They can be broadly divided into two groups, the effects produced upon the man himself, and those produced outside of the man.

The effects upon the man himself are: First, the effect upon the mental body itself, *i.e.*, a habit of readily repeating a particular thought, and secondly, the effects produced on the other two vehicles, the astral and causal bodies, which are below and above the mental body respectively, in degree of density, *i.e.*, the effect upon his emotions temporarily and the building up of qualities in the ego permanently.

The effects outside of him are the production of a radiating vibration and a floating form.

Q. Please describe in detail, first, the effects upon the man himself.

Ans. The effect on the mental body of the man is that it sets up a habit because the thought tends to repeat itself. Though there are different types of matter in the mental body, each with its own special rate of vibration to which it readily responds, a strong thought sets the matter of the whole body swinging at the same rate, and if a man accustoms his mental body to a certain rate of vibration, that body learns to reproduce it easily and forms a habit of readily repeating that particular thought. Again, a mind tenanted by certain thoughts acts as a magnet to attract like thoughts from others and intensifies the original effect.

For example, by thinking even one noble thought a man sets up an attractive centre to which other noble thoughts will come of their own accord drawn by magnetic affinity, and his mind will be helped and strengthened by these thoughts flowing in from without, and so he gains more than what he gives.

Secondly, there are the effects upon the astral and causal bodies. The disturbance in one type of physical matter is communicated to another type, denser or finer ; for example, the wind disturbs the surface of the sea, and the earthquake produces a mighty wave in the ocean. Similarly, a disturbance in the gross matter of the astral body, *i.e.*, an emotion, may cause undulations in the finer matter of the mental body, *i.e.*, a thought corresponding to the emotion ; and conversely, a movement in the mental body may affect the coarser matter of the astral, a thought provoking an emotion. Thus a man may, by brooding over what he considers his wrong, easily lash himself into anger, though by thinking calm thoughts he can prevent that anger.

Again, the mental body will also act upon the finer causal body, whereby the habitual thought builds up qualities in the ego himself. Thought builds character as already explained in Chapter V on Karma. The qualities forming the character of the personality, *i.e.*, the character which is moulded in each of his personalities in turn by training and surrounding circumstances and which shows itself in the mind body, are absorbed in the causal body and become the persisting character of the individual ; and the man returns to earth with these qualities as his stock-in-trade for the new life.

Thus looking at the effects on the man himself we see that in the first place thought tends to repeat itself and

forms a habit, and that in the second place it acts not only on his emotions temporarily, but also permanently upon his character, upon the man himself. One more effect upon the man of his self-centred thoughts we shall see presently under Thought-forms.

Q. Of the two effects of thought external to the man, please describe the first, i.e., the radiating vibration.

Ans. The thought itself appears first to clairvoyant sight as a vibration in the mental body and may be either simple or complex. If it be purely intellectual by the man thinking over a philosophical question or solving a mathematical problem, the resulting vibration will be confined to the mental world; if the thought be of a spiritual nature, if it be tinged with love, aspiration or unselfish feeling, it will rise to the realm of the higher mental or even upwards into the Buddhic plane, and may be glorious and exceedingly powerful. But the majority of human thoughts are by no means simple. Absolutely pure affection exists, but very often we find it tinged with pride or selfishness, with jealousy or animal passions; and thus when a thought is tinged with personal desires, its vibrations draw downward with most of their force spent in the astral world. There being thus at least two separate vibrations both in the mental and astral bodies, the radiating vibration will be a complex one, while the thought-form will show several colours instead of only one.

Thus the first effect of thought, outside of the man, is a radiating vibration—simple or complex, according to the nature of the thought—in the sea of mental matter alone or in both the mental and the astral, like that produced by a stone thrown into a pond. These undulations, acting upon their respective levels like vibrations of light

or sound in the physical world, radiate out in all directions, becoming less powerful as they go farther away from their source. The thought-radiations affect not only the sea of the surrounding mental matter, but also other mental bodies moving in it. The vibrations of a note struck on a piano are carried through the air and set the corresponding note sounding on another piano tuned exactly to the same pitch. Similarly, a thought-vibration in a mental body being conveyed through mental matter tends to reproduce itself in another mental body, *i.e.*, produces in the other mental body thought of the same type as that in the mind of the thinker who sent forth the vibration; in other words, thought may be said to be 'infectious'.

The strength of the radiation is poured out chiefly upon one of the four levels of the lower mental world; but a man's thoughts, being centred mostly round himself, are undulations of the lowest subdivision of the mental world, while owing to his mental body being still undeveloped, the higher portions of that body are yet quite dormant.

The distance covered by such a wave and the force and persistence with which it impinges upon the mental bodies of others depend on the strength and clearness of the original thought, the thinker being in the same position as a speaker who sets in motion waves of sound in air radiating in all directions and carrying his message, the distance to which his voice can penetrate depending upon the strength and clearness of its enunciation. Thus a strong thought will carry much farther than a weak or undecided one, but clearness and distinctness are of more importance even than strength. Again, like a voice falling upon heedless ears a strong wave of thought may

sweep past without affecting the mind of a man already engaged in some other line of thought.

This radiating vibration conveys the character of the thought, but not its subject, and is extremely adaptable. It may reproduce itself exactly if it finds a subject readily responding to it in every way, otherwise it produces a decided effect upon lines broadly similar to its own. The devotional vibrations rippling out from a Hindu sitting rapt in devotion to Shri Krishna, striking upon the mental or astral body of another Vaishnavite will arouse, in the latter, thought and feeling identical with the original, but the same vibrations striking upon a Muhammadan or a Christian may arouse in him the sentiment of devotion to Allah or to Christ (or the Blessed Virgin) respectively, and even touching the mental body of a materialist without any idea of devotion would still produce an elevating effect by stirring the higher part of his mental body into some sort of activity, though they cannot create a type of vibration to which the man is totally unaccustomed. Thus a man thinking along high lines is doing missionary work though he may be entirely unconscious of it.

On the contrary, a man thinking of another with hatred or malice radiates a wave tending to provoke similar passions in others; and though his feeling of hatred be for someone quite unknown to those others, making it impossible that they should share it, yet the radiation will stir in them an emotion of the same nature to a totally different man. They may, thereby, even commit a murder in the heat of passion, but the first man who radiates the wave, lending strength to the murderous blow, will have to share the karma of the murder as one of the originators of that passion.

Q. What does an ordinary man's astral body with his passions and desires look like when seen by clairvoyant sight ?

Ans. The average astral body—of not a specially bad, impulsive or passionate man, but just the ordinary average man—when looked at clairvoyantly, is seen to be one whole swirling mass. Instead of certain striations with colours clearly marked and circulating as they should do on the surface of his astral body, there are seen fifty or sixty little vortices or whirlpools in violent circulation, each of which makes a hard knot, like a wart on the physical body, owing to the rapidity of its motion. These things stud the man's astral body all over and make it impossible for him to think with the clearness and definiteness which he could command if he got all that into order. Because of these little whirls going on all the time, most men's thoughts are never entirely clear, while their emotions are neither definite nor one-pointed.

On being analysed, these whirls are all found to have originated either in some little outburst of temper, or little worries, or little feelings of offence, jealousy, envy, perhaps even of hatred, which the man has had some time within the last forty-eight hours, because such things persist at least that length of time. If the man should renew the same kind of thought about the same person, he will make a much larger vortex, which will last much longer. If, however, he thinks one angry thought about a person, it will set up one of those disturbances in the matter of his astral body which will last about a couple of days, even though he may forget within ten minutes that he had the transitory feeling of annoyance or may believe the effect to have completely disappeared. These vortices gradually subside, but their places are taken by others ;

and nine out of ten men, just the ordinary men in the street, unconsciously contrive to keep their stock of these vortices pretty well at the same level, and are always dotted over with these ugly-looking warts which utterly warp them from thinking or feeling as they otherwise would.

All these whirls, from the viewpoint of psychic force, are like open sores through which the will-power of the man is leaking out all the time; and the first thing for a man who wants to conserve his energies and do good work with them is to check all these sources of waste and keep his astral and mental bodies perfectly calm by control of temper and by avoiding all petty worries and undesirable little feelings and thoughts.

Q. Now what is the second effect of thought outside of the man ?

Ans. The second effect of thought external to the man is the creation of a definite, floating thought-form.

The mental and astral bodies are chiefly concerned with the appearance of thought-forms. Every thought produces correlated vibrations in the matter of the mental body, accompanied by a marvellous play of colour, and the body under this impulse throws off a vibrating portion of itself, shaped by the nature of the vibrations. This portion gathers round itself similar matter from the mental elemental essence which surrounds us in all directions, producing a thought-form of only one colour if the thought is a simple one. But when the man's energy flows outwards towards external objects of desire or is occupied in passional or emotional activities, this energy works, not in the mental matter, but in the grosser matter of the astral or desire body. Thus when a man's passions are excited, or a wave of emotion sweeps over him, his astral body is thrown into violent agitation with various characteristic

colours flashing through it. The astral body then gives rise to a second class of entities, similar in constitution to the simple thought-form, but limited to the astral plane, and caused by the activity of Kāma-Manas or the mind dominated by desire. This body when vibrating throws off a portion of itself, shaped as before by the nature of the vibrations, and this attracts to itself some of the elemental essence of the astral world. Such a thought-form has for its body this elemental essence and for its soul the desire or passion which threw it forth, while its force will be proportionate to the amount of mental energy combined with the desire or passion. Thought-forms of this second kind are by far the most common, as few thoughts of ordinary persons are untinged with desire, passion or emotion.

The elemental essence, spoken of in connection with the Second Life-Wave in Chapter VIII, that strange half-intelligent life which surrounds us in all directions, is not differentiated into stable or persistent forms. The matter of the astral and mental worlds, irrespective of a soul who makes a vehicle out of it, is alive with this elemental essence—a peculiar kind of life, which is delicately sensitive, quick with life, and is not individualised. The effect produced on the particles of water in a cup as an electric current is passed through it may give a faint idea of the vitality and energy of mental and astral grades of matter as elemental essence of the first and second and third types affects and vivifies them. This vivified matter is, as it were, in a 'critical state,' ready to precipitate into thought-forms the moment a vibration of thought from a thinker's mind affects it. It thus responds readily to the influence of human thoughts and feelings, every thought or impulse clothing itself in a temporary vehicle of this vitalised

matter. Such a thought or impulse becomes for the time a living creature, the thought-force being the soul and the vivified matter the body, and is spoken of as a thought-form or an artificial elemental. A thought-form is a living entity with a strong tendency to carry out the intention of the thinker, but is neither self-conscious nor capable of experiencing pleasure or pain. There is an infinite variety in the colour and shape of such thought-forms, for each thought draws round it the matter which is appropriate for its expression, and sets that matter into vibration in harmony with its own. According to the type and quality of the thought is the thought-form made out of mental or astral elemental essence. These thought-forms are fleeting, or lasting for hours, months or years; and hence they are classed among the inhabitants of the invisible worlds under the name of 'elementals'. There are four general principles underlying the production of all thought-forms:

1. Quality or character of thought determines colour.
2. Nature of thought determines form.
3. Definiteness of thought determines precision or clearness of outline.
4. Steadiness and strength of thought determine duration and size.

The colours indicate the character of the thought, and are in agreement with those which have been already described in Chapter III as existing in the bodies.

The work of a thought-form is much more limited but much more precise than that of the radiating undulation. The form cannot reach so many persons—indeed it cannot act upon a person at all unless he has in him something harmonious with the energy ensouling that form;

but when it does act, it produces in the mind-body which it influences, not merely a thought of a similar nature, but actually the same thought. A radiation may affect thousands and stir up in them thoughts on the same level as the original, yet none may happen to be identical with the original thought; but a thought-form, though it can affect only one or a few, reproduces exactly the initiatory idea.

Q. Please make the matter clearer by some sort of classification of thought-forms?

Ans. All thought-forms may be divided into three groups.

I. Those which take the image of the thinker. When a man thinks of himself as in some distant place, or wishes earnestly to be in that place, he makes a thought-form in his own image which appears there, and which, being sometimes seen by others, is taken for the astral body of the man.

II. Those which take the image of some material object. When a man thinks of a friend, a room, a landscape, or a book, he forms within his mental body a tiny image of that friend or of any of the things thought of. This image floats in the upper part of that body, usually in front of the face of the man, and at about the level of his eyes. It remains there as long as the man is contemplating that object and usually for a little time afterwards, before it is externalised or passes out, the length of time depending upon the intensity and the clearness of the thought.

III. Those which take a form entirely their own, expressing their inherent qualities in the matter which they draw round them. To represent thought-forms of the first or second group would be merely to draw portraits or



landscapes, as in those types we have the plastic mental or astral matter moulded in imitation of forms belonging to the physical plane, but in this third group we have a glimpse of the forms natural to the astral or mental planes. We are concerned here simply with the last group which may be subdivided into three classes :

1. Thoughts definitely directed towards another person or persons.
2. Thoughts not directed to others, but connected chiefly with the thinker, *i.e.*, self-centred thoughts.
3. Thoughts neither aimed specially at any person nor centred round the thinker.

Thought-forms of the above three classes of the third group mainly manifest themselves upon the astral plane, as most of them are expressions of feeling as well as of thought. The vibration of a thought with something of personal desire turns downwards and draws round itself a body of astral matter in addition to its clothing of mental matter, and the resultant thought-form can act upon the astral bodies of men as well as upon their minds ; and so it can not only raise thought within them but can also produce emotions.

1. Thoughts aimed at others :

Suppose a man sends a thought of affection or devotion, of envy or hatred ; that thought will, like any other, produce a radiating vibration which will affect all within its sphere of influence ; but the thought-form thus created has a definite intention, and so as soon as it breaks away from the mental and astral bodies of the thinker, it goes straight to the person thought of and fastens itself upon his aura. It is a kind of Leyden jar existing for the sole purpose of discharging itself and seizes the first opportunity of doing

so. The astral and mental elemental essence forms the jar, while the energy of the thought corresponds to the charge of electricity. If the man to whom it is directed is in a passive condition or is thinking along a line similar to the nature of the thought-form, it will at once discharge itself, provoking or intensifying an undulation similar to its own ; but if he be actively engaged in some other work, the thought-form hovers around him and waits for a suitable opportunity to discharge itself.

But a thought, good or evil, in order to fulfil its mission, must find, in the aura of the object to whom it is sent, materials capable of responding sympathetically to its vibrations, otherwise it cannot affect that aura at all, but rebounds from it with a force proportionate to the energy with which it impinged on that aura. Consequently, an evil thought projected at a holy person rebounds from his body, and being flung back with its own energy flies backward along the magnetic line of least resistance and strikes its projector who has within his astral and mental bodies matter similar to that of the thought-form. Thus "curses (as well as blessings) come home to roost".

A thought full of intensity, say of a pure desire full of love or benevolence, will build a form of exquisite beauty, both in shape and colour, while a thought of anger, hatred, revenge or any other evil passion, will build up a form hideous in its deformity, which is the very devil of evil filled with the desire to injure and destroy. A mother's love produces a beautiful thought-form full of tenderness, hovering round the children as a shielding and protecting agent, seeking all opportunities to serve and defend, cheering them in sorrow and, like a veritable guardian angel, warning and protecting them in danger or temptation.

2. Self-centred thoughts:

A thought aimed at some other man flies like a missile towards him, but if it be connected with the thinker himself, it remains floating near its creator, ready to react upon him and to stir in his mind the same thought once more whenever he is for a moment in a passive condition. The majority of thoughts and feelings of an ordinary man are self-centred, and so their forms remain clustering round him. Usually each definite thought creates a new thought-form; but if a thought-form of the same nature is already hovering round the thinker, under certain circumstances, a new thought on the same subject, instead of creating a new form, coalesces with and strengthens the old one, so that by long brooding over the same subject a man may sometimes create a thought-form of tremendous power. Thus every man has built for himself a shell of thought-forms, veritable garments, both of feelings and of thoughts, and the man travels through space always surrounded by a host of such forms and enclosed within a cage of his own building. So long as his mind is occupied with other thoughts, these forms hover round him and bide their time; but when the train of his thoughts is exhausted or his mind lies fallow or passive, he being the nearest to those forms is reacted upon by them at the first opportunity, and, feeling the pressure of his evil thoughts as of a suggestion from outside, believes himself to be tempted by the devil. Thus a man habitually thinking of dishonesty or coveting another's goods may commit theft in a weak moment.

On the contrary, a man with habitual thoughts of purity may, by the pressure of his thought-forms, be able to do good things which, being much above his normal power, seem to him to have been done with the help of

angels, though both the above instances are merely cases of natural reactions of the respective men's habitual feelings and thoughts.

3. Thoughts neither self-centred nor directed specially to any person:

A thought-form generated by this class of thought neither hovers round the person, following him wherever he goes, nor shoots straight away from him, aiming at a definite objective, but simply remains idly floating in the atmosphere where it was created, radiating vibrations similar to those originally sent forth by its creator. If it does not come into contact with any other mental body, its stock of energy is gradually exhausted by the radiation, and the form falls to pieces. But if that thought-form succeeds in awakening sympathetic vibrations in any mental body near by, it is attracted to and usually absorbed by that mental body. An ordinary man thinks numerous thoughts of this class and leaves them behind him as a sort of trail which marks the route of their creator.

The whole atmosphere is thus filled with vague thoughts of this last type, and walking along and, as it were, picking our way through these vague, wandering fragments of other people's thoughts, our minds are seriously affected by them if not definitely occupied. Sweeping through a mind lying idle the majority of such forms do not arouse any special interest, though occasionally comes one which attracts attention, and the mind, fastening upon it, entertains it for a moment or two and dismisses it a little stronger than it was on its arrival. Not one-fourth of our thoughts are our own, but are simply fragments picked up from the atmosphere, in most cases valueless and with a general tendency distinctly more towards evil than towards good.

Every ordinary man is producing these three classes of thought-forms all through his life.

We are peopling our atmosphere either with angels of beauty and virtue or with hideous devils of ugliness and vice, purifying or befouling the minds of our generation, and if ever we could see them, the sight would make us pause and be always careful to discard all evil or impure thoughts. Thus we can no longer say that at least our thoughts are our own, or that while we should certainly be careful about our words and actions, it does not matter at all what our thoughts are. As a matter of fact our thoughts are less our own than our words or actions, for the former travel to a far greater distance from us than the latter two, and their influence working directly on the minds of others is stronger and far more widely spread.

Such is the power or action of thought on ourselves and on others. We not only affect ourselves strongly by forming our habits and character in the astral and mental bodies and building permanent qualities in the causal body, but we also influence others for good or for evil by the radiating vibrations and the thought-forms of various kinds.

Q. The action or effect of thought is now understood, but how should we use this knowledge ?

Ans. There are two main uses :

1. We can forward our own evolution.
2. We can help our fellow-men.

Q. How can we forward our own evolution through a knowledge of the power of thought ?

Ans. Since every thought or emotion produces a permanent effect by strengthening or weakening a tendency, and since, furthermore, every thought-vibration and thought-form must inevitably react upon the thinker, we

must exercise great control and care as to the thought or impulse we allow within ourselves. An ordinary man allows himself to yield to all kinds of emotions and thoughts, but by a scientific study of the action of these forces as explained above, he would realise that it is his interest as well as his duty to have all his emotions and thoughts absolutely under control. The stage of evolution at which we have arrived is the development of the mental body, and a man, recognising that the mind is not the man but an instrument for his use, should assist that development by not allowing the mind to indulge in its vagaries and by endeavouring to assert control over it.

We should therefore forward our evolution, first, by keeping our mind and emotions under control and thereby building our character, and secondly, by not foolishly wasting our energy which can be utilised for better work and higher purposes.

Q. What should we do to keep our mind and emotions under control, and avoid evil, idle or useless thoughts which trouble the mind ?

Ans. Instead of allowing every surging or upwelling of emotions to sway us, we must learn to keep them under control by the mind. The reins of mind in the hands of the driver, or the real man, must be able to control and guide the horses of desires drawing the chariot of the physical body.

The first step to control the mind is to keep it usefully occupied. It must not be allowed to remain idle, as thereby any passing thought-form may drift into it, and while lying fallow it is more likely to take up evil impressions than good ones. The best way is to keep at the back of our mind some high thought or some inspiration to noble living. The mind can only occupy itself with

our ability. Thus in writing a letter we should write it well and accurately without carelessness in detail ; in reading a book we should read it with attention, trying to grasp the author's meaning.

Again, a person training his mind should maintain an attitude of watchfulness regarding the thoughts coming into the mind and should exercise a constant selection. The practice of refusing to harbour evil thoughts, their prompt ejection when they effect an entry, and the replacement of an evil thought by one of good character, will so tune the mind that it will act automatically, repelling the evil and attracting the good.

Q. Now how to build character with the knowledge of the power of thought ?

Ans. This is the third method of concentration, recommended above for a non-devotional man, and has been already described in Chapter IV on Karma as one of the threads of the cord of fate. It may again be described here in brief.

Examining his character a man should pick out some distinct defect, say, irritability. But he should not forget that, as thought builds, fixing thought on irritability would make it more permanent instead of getting rid of it. He should always take, as the object of his thought, the opposite of any weakness in him ; e.g., to remove inaccuracy, he should meditate on the exactly opposite virtue of truth. Thus taking the virtue which is the exact opposite of the weakness of irritability, namely patience, he should, in the early morning before going out into the world, sit in retirement in a quiet place for five minutes, and think and meditate on patience, its value, its beauty, its practice under provocation, etc., and write, as it were, a mental essay on patience, recalling the mind

when it wanders away and bringing it back again and again from various side-issues it might have wandered into. He should think of himself as a model of patience with a vow that he would feel and practise that virtue that day in practical life. For a few days there may not be any perceptible change, and though he may still show irritability, he should go on meditating every morning. Then as he says an irritating thing, a thought will flash into his mind that he ought to have been patient. Still going on, the thought of patience will arise *with* the irritable impulse and the outer manifestation will be checked. With a little more practice the irritable impulse will grow feebler; and irritability disappearing, patience will become the normal attitude. Thus one virtue after another can be taken and an ideal character created by the power of thought, until passions, appetites and lower nature are dominated and thoroughly brought under control.

Of course a large number of people in the world are in the habit of taking the character of which they are possessed as a sort of inalienable something which is given to them, like a lame leg. If a man has a bad temper or a weak will, or finds himself full of desires for the grosser things, he says: "That is how I am made; it is my nature." He does not realise that he made himself by his past lives and that therefore, taking hold of any weakness, he can change it by his present exertion. But he does not know that he can change a nature which is undesirable, and, furthermore, he does not see particularly why he should. It is no easy matter for a man to change his character which is the very fundamental basis of him. Perhaps there is no sufficient inducement or adequate reason held out to the average man as to why he should take all that trouble. But if he understands God's Plan,

if, because God is Love, he learns to love God and to seek to co-operate with Him, then he has the most tremendous of all possible motives for making himself fit to co-operate in the great work of evolution. Again, with a knowledge of reincarnation, he knows that his present life is not the only life, but that he has all the lives he needs, that the point at which he leaves off in one life is the point where he takes up his work of improving his character in the next life, that the interval, however great, which may elapse between the end of one life and the beginning of the next, does not in the least degree interfere with the unity of the life-process, and that therefore he can change himself, make the most fundamental changes in his character and disposition. Thus it is only the higher knowledge which Theosophy gives that supplies a really sufficient incentive to any serious change of character.

Q. What, then, should we do to avoid wasting our energy?

Ans. Each man has a certain amount of energy and he is responsible for its use in the best possible way, but an ordinary man foolishly wastes his force. He is simply a centre of agitated vibration; he is constantly in a condition of worry or deep depression or is unduly excited about some trifle, communicating, though unconsciously, his vibrations of unrest to all others who may be unfortunate enough to be around him.

Another common way of wasting energy is by unnecessary argument on matters of politics or religion, or on incidents of ordinary life. A wise man does not try to enforce his opinion on others, and, knowing that what another believes is no business of his, simply declines to waste his time and energy in unprofitable wrangling, though he is quite willing to give information when asked.

People age more by worry than by work. Worry is the process of repeating the same train of thought over and over again with little alteration, without coming to any result. Many thus fritter away their energy in forecasting evil for themselves and their loved ones, with the fear of death or financial ruin. But they need not try to cross a bridge before they actually come to it and should also know that the world is governed by absolute justice, that none can wrong them save as an instrument of the Law and that nothing which they have not deserved by their past karma can ever come to them, and should therefore learn to train the mind to rest on the Good Law and establish a habit of content.

Again, a wise man declines to take offence at the statement or action of another or to let his serenity be disturbed thereby, as he knows that an irritating remark, even when intentionally spiteful, can in no way harm him except in so far as he foolishly allows himself to be wounded in his feelings and thus to lose control over his vehicles.

"Am I to set my life upon a throw,
Because a bear is rude or surly? No.
A modest, sensible and well-behaved man
Will not insult me, and no other can."

Q. Is a quickening of our own evolution the only advantage of controlling our mind and emotions and of husbanding our energy?

Ans. In addition to forwarding his own evolution, a man thereby makes himself useful to his fellow-men, avoids doing harm to them and learns how to do them good. For example, if he allows himself to be angry, he not only sets up an evil habit and injures himself, but by radiating vibrations of anger seriously acts upon those

who may be trying to control their irritability, though he may not be thinking of them at all.

Every time he sends out a wave of anger, he tends to arouse a similar vibration in another if it did not previously exist in that latter, or to intensify it if it be already present.

Thus he makes his brother's work of self-development harder for him, though simply by controlling his emotions and radiating soothing vibrations he can greatly help that brother on his way. In this way we realise our responsibility for even a single impure or evil thought which may spread as moral contagion among our fellow-men. There are thousands of persons with latent germs of evil which may atrophy and die for want of nutrition; but if we yield to an unholy thought, its radiating vibrations may awaken the latent germs of evil in some man and cause them to grow into activity, starting that soul in a downward course of evil actions which, in their turn, may in future seriously affect thousands of other men. Happily this is also true of good thought, and a man by his thoughts can become a veritable sun radiating love, calm and peace all around him, and this magnificent power is within the reach of all, rich and poor alike.

Q. But what should a man do who cannot control his thought or passions and who, though he has often tried to do so, has constantly failed?

Ans. We should look at the problem scientifically. If an evil quality or habit has a certain amount of strength, it is because we have not tried to repress that strength, but have allowed it to accumulate and gather a momentum which makes it difficult now to deal with it. It means we have made it easy for ourselves to move along certain lines and difficult, though not impossible, to move

along others. But even if we have devoted several lives to the gathering of such energy, the time so devoted has been limited, and the amount of momentum after all can only be finite. If we now realise the mistake and want to control that habit, we should put forward exactly as much strength in the opposite direction as we originally spent in gathering that momentum. Of course we will have to work patiently as we cannot instantly counteract the work of lives, but as souls we can go on generating force indefinitely, and though we may often fail, each effort will reduce the store of the evil force till it is finally exhausted.

Q. Now how should we utilise our knowledge of this power of thought to help others ?

Ans. We can make thought-forms intentionally and aim them at another with the object of helping him. This is one of the lines of activity adopted by those who desire to serve humanity. We must first remember to think of a person as we wish him to be, for the image that we make of him will act powerfully upon him and tend to draw him into harmony with itself. Again, in thinking of our friends we must fix our thoughts on their good qualities. In trying to help a friend to get rid of a weakness, we should not imagine him as having that evil quality we want removed, but think of him intently as possessing the opposite virtue, because by thinking of any quality we strengthen its undulations and therefore intensify it.

From this consideration it follows that the habit of gossip or scandal, in which many people thoughtlessly indulge themselves, is a horrible wickedness, as in such discussions they fix their thought, not upon any good quality one may possess, but upon some alleged evil. About gossip a Master says thus :

“ If you think of the evil in another, you are doing at the same time three wicked things :

“ 1. You are filling your neighbourhood with evil thought instead of with good thought, and so you are adding to the sorrow of the world.

“ 2. If there is in that man the evil that you think, you are strengthening it and feeding it ; and so you are making your brother worse instead of better. But generally the evil is not there, and you have only fancied it ; and then your wicked thought tempts your brother to do wrong ; for if he is not yet perfect, you may make him that which you have thought him.

“ 3. You fill your own mind with evil thought instead of good ; and so you hinder your own growth, and make yourself, for those who can see, an ugly and painful object instead of a beautiful and lovable one.”

Q. But how should we help one, for instance, under the sway of the evil habit of drink or irritability ?

Ans. We should think helpfully of those whom we love or want to help. We should hold before them in thought a high ideal of themselves and wish strongly that they may be able to attain to it. Knowing a certain defect in a man's character we should not dwell upon it, but should formulate a strong thought of the contrary virtue and send out waves of that thought to him. If we want to help a man addicted to drink, we should first ascertain when the patient's mind is likely to be unemployed, such as his time of going to bed ; for it would be all the better if that man be asleep. Then sitting down we should picture very vividly the image of that man seated before us, and fixing attention on that image should address to it slowly and distinctly the thoughts we want to impress on his mind and present them as clear mental images as if laying arguments before him. In this case we should place before him a vivid picture of the disease and misery entailed by the

drink-habit and the consequent nervous break-down with its inevitable end. We should not try to control the man, but his intelligence should be convinced and his emotions aroused and purified. If the man be asleep, he will be drawn to us and will animate the image of himself before us, but success depends on the concentration and the steadiness of our thought and upon the man's mental condition at the time, though if he be occupied with thoughts of his own, our thought-form will bide its time and do its errand of mercy when his train of thoughts exhausts itself.

In trying to help an irritable man we should similarly impress on his mind mental images of the disadvantages of his loss of control over himself and, wishing him to be calm and serene, send him strong, soothing influences.

Q. What about help by prayers for the well-being of the living or of the dead?

Ans. The effect of prayers for the "living" and the "dead" has already been explained in Chapter VI. A strong wish for a man's good, sent to him as a general protective agency, will remain about the man as a thought-form for a time proportionate to the strength of the thought and, acting as a barrier to dangers, will guard him against evil.

Sometimes we cannot do anything for a sufferer as his physical brain may be closed to our suggestion by prejudice or religious bigotry, but his astral and mental bodies are always open for us to help.

The aid rendered to another by prayer is largely of this character, the greater effectiveness of prayer over good wishes being due to the greater concentration and intensity thrown into the prayer, though sometimes prayers call the attention of superhuman intelligences, and direct aid may be rendered by Them.

The phenomena of mind-cure and faith-cure show the power of thought even in the physical world, but since it can act more easily in astral and mental worlds, we can exercise that power while we see someone suffering from sadness or depression as we walk along the street, or ride in a tram-car or a carriage. Sending him soothing and calm thoughts may help him, and though it may be difficult for us to believe that we are at all influencing and helping persons by our thoughts, anyone with a practice of such efforts will find strong evidence of his success.

The absence of physical bodies is no barrier to the force of thought, but on the contrary makes the work easier, because there is no heavy physical matter to be set vibrating, as is necessary in the case of a living man before the thought can reach his waking consciousness ; and so we can help, cheer, soothe and counsel the dead by our strong thoughts or by prayers as already explained in Chapter VI.

Again, there is the power of combined thought or combined prayer to help a common object, and the contemplative Orders of the Roman Catholic Church, as well as recluses of the Hindu and Buddhist faiths, diffuse through the world lofty and noble thoughts, doing infinite service to humanity in the mass.

Q. Can we help by thought even when we ourselves are out of the physical body during sleep ?

Ans. We can do very effective work when our bodies are lying peacefully asleep. Freed from the burden of physical bodies we are really more powerful in the effect we can produce by thought. An ordinary man during sleep is usually engrossed in the subjects which interest him during waking life, and several times when he sleeps over

a thing before deciding, "the night brings counsel" and advice for the important decision. The problem needing solution should be quietly held in the mind when going to sleep; it should not be debated or argued over, but simply stated and left. The Thinker will deal with it when out of the body and impress it on the brain, though it is advisable to keep paper and pencil by the bed to note down the impression immediately on awakening.

In the same way we can, during our sleep, help a friend, dead or alive. We must picture the friend in our mind before sleep and determine to find and help him. The mental image will draw him to us, and we will communicate with him in the astral world. During waking hours we can help anyone whom we know to be in sorrow or suffering by sitting down and forming a strong thought-image of the sufferer and then pouring out a stream of compassion, affection and strength; but during night we ourselves can go in the astral body to the bed-side of the sufferer and, instead of offering merely general consolation, can help more effectively by seeing the exact requirements of the case. But we must be perfectly calm ere going to sleep and should not allow any emotion to be aroused by the thought of the friend, as it may cause a swirl in our astral body, which may either scare the friend away or make it impossible for mental vibrations from us to pass outwards. Much good work can be done in this way as an astral helper, though we may remember nothing in our waking consciousness.

One more form of good done either in or out of physical bodies by the power of thought is the helping of good causes or of public movements beneficial to mankind. We can assist, inspire and advise all sorts of people who may be unlikely to listen to us physically. We can

suggest liberal ideas to ministers and statesmen, poets and preachers, and writers of books, magazines and newspapers, and can even suggest plots to novelists and beneficial schemes to philanthropists.

Q. Can we affect even physical matter by the power of thought? Can our thoughts have effect on the health of our physical bodies?

Ans. Much has been written of late years as to the influence of thought on the physical body, as diseases are both produced and cured by thought. It is found that in times of epidemic those who dwell most on the thought of the epidemic become easy victims to the fell disease.

Moreover, it is by the power of thought that Prāna or vital energy is controlled and poured by the mesmerist from his own body to that of the nervous and weak subject who thereby regains complete physical health.

Again, thought is utilised by various methods for the curing of physical disease in a systematic way. One such method is to keep the mind filled with thoughts of health, thinking oneself possessed of a strong healthy body, while in mind-cure or faith-cure one is helped in his thought of health by strong faith in some thing or person. Another method is to withdraw into the silence of our inmost being and bringing ourselves into communion with the Divine to draw thence all the strength and health we need. But there are things of greater importance than mere bodily health, and though we need not let our mind dwell on pain or sickness, we need not likewise let it dwell on thought of health as it entails expenditure of mental energy which can wisely be utilised for higher purposes.

Another effect of thought on physical matter is that the constant radiations of our thought-forms impregnate the inanimate objects around us, so that even the walls

and pictures of our room reflect those thoughts and feelings. The chair, the desk and all surrounding objects are unconsciously magnetised by our strong repeated thoughts and possess the power of suggesting the same type of thoughts to others who come under their influence. Thus it was found that a certain prison-cell was so charged with the thought of suicide, that all prisoners who were put into it committed suicide one after another. The efficacy of some kinds of talismans or amulets depends on the same principle, the object forming the talisman having been impregnated with certain definite kinds of vibrations by concentrated thought.

Thus wrong thought is as swift for evil as right thought is for good ; and thought, which is within the power of the rich and the poor, the old and the young alike, can wound as well as heal, distress as well as comfort. Such is the Law of Thought and such its power or effect, and happy are they who use it wisely.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EVOLUTION OF LIFE

Question. What do you mean by the 'Evolution of Life'?

Answer. The word 'evolution' from the Latin verb 'evolvere'—to roll out, is used to denote the unfolding of ever higher and higher forms out of lower ones. According to Herbert Spencer, "evolution is the homogeneous becoming the heterogeneous, the simple becoming the complex." As Darwin pointed out, all nature is in a state of evolution, lower forms ever giving place to higher, simpler ones to more complex, as the bud to the flower, the flower to the fruit.

But the doctrine of evolution did not wait for Darwin to give it expression, though the credit of propounding it scientifically belongs to him. Science and Religion are both summed up in the saying of a Persian mystic: "God sleeps in the mineral, dreams in the vegetable, wakes to consciousness in the animal, to self-consciousness in the man, and will awake to divine consciousness in the man made perfect." Those deeply versed in the esoteric teachings of any religion may find anticipations of many truths which modern science has not yet reached, and if science made common cause with religion, the progress of humanity would be greatly accelerated.

The grosser side of manifestation of the One Life is that which is described as matter. Now there are two poles in manifestation: the form-side, or the pole of matter, on the one hand, and the life-side, or the pole of Spirit, on the other. They are the two opposite aspects of the one Eternal Life, and the process of evolution consists in that life in its dual aspects going outwards to cause diversity, and when the limit of diversity is reached, drawing inwards to reintegrate the diverse separated units into a mighty and enriched unity. The outward-going life seeks diversity and may be said therefore to tend to the pole of matter; the inward-turning life seeks unity, and may be said therefore to tend to the pole of Spirit.

The Law of Evolution, as propounded by the Darwinian School, demonstrates with scientific accuracy the gradual perfection of forms and has for its foundation the universal presence of Protoplasm—the physical basis of life. In the lowest forms of animal life this protoplasm is undifferentiated, existing simply as a homogeneous jelly-like mass, but in higher forms it is educated into cells of different shapes, sizes and functions, and the animal kingdom is classified into Orders, etc., according to the relative complexity of the structures involved. This classification indicates that the more evolved the life, the more elaborate will be the form through which it functions.

In the details of Embryology lies the proof of Evolution itself, since it shows all animal forms to have passed, during the stages of their development, through the whole gamut of all the lower species. At the moment of fertilisation, the ovum consists of a single cell, which multiplies rapidly by division, and it is during these subsequent stages of development that the differences first appear which, later on, result in the production of all the

countless varieties of forms. But a study of the embryos of different animals has shown that *all* of them pass in turn through exactly the same stages. That is, a comparison of the embryos of a fish, fowl, calf and man reveals the fact that the primary stages through which all of them pass are identical, the lower and less evolved forms ceasing, one after the other, from further development, dropping out of the race, as it were, when the appointed standard of development is reached, until only the human embryo is left to complete the course. This so-called Recapitulation Theory means that during the course of its development each animal gives an epitome of its race, showing step by step all the stages through which forms have evolved during the course of countless ages.

Evolution may correctly be defined as the study of evolving forms during the unfolding of consciousness. Science studies only the evolving form under the 'Law of Evolution,' but Theosophy studies also the unfolding life under the Law of Reincarnation, as the one Law is the necessary concomitant of the other, and both these Laws are necessary for a complete understanding of life.

Thus though evolution, according to science, is merely the building together of higher and more complicated organisms, these organisms are really meant to express with greater and greater perfection the Divine Life that is seeking manifestation in the universe. The great point to remember here is that there is an evolution not only of form, but also of life. In fact, the evolution is primarily of life, and not of form—though forms also evolve and grow better, mainly in order to be suitable vehicles for the more advanced life. In a scheme of evolution the Divine Life involves itself more and more

deeply in matter in order to receive through it certain vibrations which cannot affect the Life directly. These vibrations or impacts from without arouse corresponding vibrations, within the Life, so that the Life learns to respond to them and later on to generate them from within itself, thereby developing the spiritual powers folded within it.

Thus all evolution consists essentially of an evolving Life passing from form to form as it evolves and storing up in itself the experiences gained through the forms, until the original germ of life becomes the perfect image of God.

Q. But what is the motive power of evolution ?

Ans. It is the Life which involves itself in matter before it evolves complicated organisms of every kind, and its whole course may be thought of in two stages—the gradual assumption of grosser and grosser matter, *i.e.*, involution, and then the gradual casting off of vehicles which have been assumed, *i.e.*, evolution. But to understand this a conception of the Three Great Outpourings is necessary.

Q. What is meant by the Three Great Outpourings ?

Ans. The impulses which built the seven interpenetrating worlds with their elements from the ocean of interstellar space, as stated in Chapter II, came from the Third Logos, from Brahmā, and are called the 'First Great Outpouring,' or the First Life-Wave.

Acting through His Third Aspect He sends forth the successive impulses of force into the stupendous sphere which defines the limit of His field of activity. The first impulse sets up all through the sphere a vast number of tiny vortices each of which draws into itself forty-nine bubbles, and arranges them in a certain shape. The groupings of bubbles so formed are the atoms of the

second of the interpenetrating worlds. The whole number of bubbles is not used in this way, sufficient being left in the dissociated state to act as atoms for the first or highest of these worlds. In due course comes another impulse which seizes upon nearly all these forty-nine-bubble atoms, leaving only enough to provide atoms for the second world, draws them back into itself and then, throwing them out again, sets up among them vortices, each of which holds within itself 49^2 or 2,401 bubbles. These form the atoms of the third world. The next impulse in the same way seizes upon nearly all these 2,401 bubble atoms, draws them back into their original form, and again throws them outward once more as the atoms of the fourth world—each atom containing this time 49^3 or $49 \times 2,401$ bubbles. This process is repeated for an atom of the fifth or mental plane with 49^4 or $2,401 \times 2,401$ bubbles, for an atom of the sixth or astral plane with 49^5 or $49 \times 2,401 \times 2,401$ bubbles and for an atom of the seventh or physical plane with 49^6 or $2,401 \times 2,401 \times 2,401$ bubbles, with a definite number of bubbles in addition, owing to the peculiar formation of the physical atom.

Thus does this vast Wave of Life well forth from the Logos, pulsating through the whole solar system and breaking itself into endless fragments—as the smooth current dashing itself over a precipice breaks into myriads of separate drops—in order to become the life-atoms called matter. There is not one atom, one particle of matter, that has not the life of God as its life. There is nothing that is dead. Hence what science calls matter is really spirit-matter, Spirit made manifest, and of this living matter are the worlds built. Matter is the necessary vehicle of manifestation for Spirit ;

neither can exist without the other, and the Divine Life becomes Spirit only when it ensouls matter.

When the atoms of each of the seven planes have been created, then the Third Logos creates the subplanes of each plane. The atoms of each plane are swept into groups of two, three, four, etc., to make its subplanes. The first or highest subplane is composed of the single atoms themselves, while the second, third and other lower subplanes are made by combinations of these atoms. Thus, as stated before in Chapter II, the highest subplane of the physical plane is composed of simple physical atoms, of two varieties—the positive and the negative—and by the combinations of these atoms are built the remaining subplanes of that plane. It is in the course of building the subplanes of the physical world that the chemical elements are produced which are the basic materials for the building of all physical forms. In this way the lower subdivisions of each plane come into existence, and the Divine Spirit becomes more and more veiled in matter in its descent.

Then into the matter thus vivified the Second Outpouring of Life descends from the Second Aspect of the Deity, Vishnu, which combining the elements, or aggregations of atoms, into organisms and ensouling them gives characteristics or qualities to matter, enabling the matter to answer in different ways to different stimuli from outside, one kind of atom and its aggregations answering to changes of thought, another responding to changes of emotion and desire, and so on.

This Second Life-Wave, called the Monadic essence especially when clothed in atomic matter of various planes, having descended through higher planes, comes to the mental plane, where it throws the matter of that plane,

already by the nature of its atoms capable of responding by vibrations to thought-changes, into combinations fit to express thoughts—abstract thoughts in the subtler matter, concrete thoughts in the coarser. Out of these two kinds of mental matter, the higher and the lower, are made later the causal and the mental bodies. As the first and second elemental essence, the Wave builds on this plane the first and second elemental kingdoms in its higher and lower levels respectively. Passing onwards into the astral plane, the Life-Wave forms on each subplane the combinations fit to express sensations (out of which astral matter or desire-stuff is made later the desire body), builds on that plane the third elemental kingdom and is named the third elemental essence or the elemental essence of the astral plane. At its two latter stages as the second and the third elemental essence, it is very intimately connected with man, as it enters largely into the composition of his various vehicles, and influences his thought and action, as already described for mental and astral elementals in Chapter III. Descending further into the physical world it forms on each subplane the combinations fitted to constitute physical bodies—the future chemical elements, as they are called on the three lower subplanes—and builds on that plane the mineral kingdom, when it is sometimes called the mineral monad; but at the central point of that stage the downward pressure ceases and is replaced by an upward tendency; the Outbreathing or involution has ceased, and the indrawing or evolution commences. The work of the second Life-Wave, being that of forming combinations which show qualities, is spoken of as the giving of qualities. The varying powers of each atom and its aggregations are given by this Life-Wave on its

downward sweep until it reaches the lowest point of its huge circle, *i.e.*, the middle stage of the mineral kingdom, and then the Life-Wave begins to climb upwards, building forms out of the matter which now shows the qualities imparted to it on the downward sweep. This matter, now showing qualities—powers of response, *i.e.*, of internal rearrangement under the impact of stimuli—is drawn together and aggregated into forms—mineral, vegetable and animal forms, and lastly forms of animal man. It is the energy of the Second Logos which, ensouling the matter of the seven planes, enables it to build forms. Each form persists only so long as the Life of the Second Logos holds the matter in that form. Now for the first time appear the phenomena of birth, growth, decay and death; a form is born because the Life of the Second Logos has the work of evolution to do through that form; it grows while that work is progressing; it shows signs of decay when the Second Logos slowly withdraws the life from the form; it dies when finally the Second Logos withdraws all of the life, in order to send it back again to build a newer and better form, which can give to the life the new experiences necessary for its further growth. The second Life-Wave thus gives qualities to matter and then builds forms from that matter, *viz.*, the seven kingdoms of nature—the three elemental kingdoms, and the mineral, the vegetable, the animal and the human kingdom. The last kingdom has only its form given to it in the beginning, and the real tenant takes possession of that house only after the Third Great Outpouring has acted upon it.

There are five spheres from the physical up to the Nirvānic plane, which make up the field of evolution. Beyond these on the highest, the Māhāparanirvānic

plane, dwells in the perfection of His own nature the Lord of the system, Ishvara unmanifest. On the second plane shine out His Aspects, manifested powers, the Logoi from whom the Life-Waves come, Powers which make matter and build forms, and the Regenerative Power from whom the Third Life-Wave is to come. There also dwell the seeds of Divinity, the Monads, emanations which are to be human spirits in the field of evolution; and the Third Life-Wave consists of these human spirits sent to ensoul and utilise the bodies prepared for them through long ages of evolution, the slow climbing from mineral to plant, from plant to animal, from animal to animal-man. Then comes the time when the human-divine spirits—the Monads—that have been waiting the time for their advent, hover over the human forms that are being prepared for them, though they are yet unable to guide or control them. These form the Third Great Outpouring, the fragments of Divinity ensouling the forms prepared for their coming, and making them tabernacles worthy of God.

Thus the First Life-Wave came forth from the Third Logos of the Theosophist, Brahmā of the Hindu, the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Christian Trinity, formed the atoms ensouled by Him, drew them together and built up the numerous aggregations of the various types of atoms into elements; *i.e.*, built the seven great planes, with their subplanes, of the solar system. The Second Life-Wave descended from the Second Logos, Vishnu, the Son, the Second Person of the Christian Trinity, gave to matter characteristics or qualities and built forms; while the Third Life-Wave came from the First Logos, Shiva or Mahādeva, the Liberator, the Father, the First Person of the Christian Trinity, and

poured out the human spirits to ensoul the forms. These three great Waves or currents of evolution are distinguishable on our earth in connection with humanity: the making of the material, the building of the house, and the growing of the tenant of the house; or the evolution of spirit-matter, the evolution of form, and the evolution of self-consciousness.

So the outpoured Life was involved in matter, and these germs of Life, these myriad seeds, all came from one Ishvara. Qualities are to be brought out of these seeds, and these qualities are powers, but powers manifested through matter; and evolution consists in the drawing out of these powers. Evolution can therefore be summed up in one phrase thus: it is latent potentialities becoming active powers.

Now it is the infolded Deity that is the hidden motive power and makes evolution at once possible and inevitable, the upward lifting force that overcomes every obstacle and is the guarantee of man's final triumph.

Q. But does not the Life coming from Ishvara contain in itself everything already developed, every manifested power, every possibility realised as actuality? Why from the Perfect should the imperfect come forth and then return into that perfection whence it came? Why this long evolution and what is the goal or purpose of this evolution of life?

Ans. The question is based on a fundamental misunderstanding. The One willed to multiply. Multiplication necessarily means division and therefore limitation, and limitation necessarily implies imperfection. That limitation is also shown by the use of the word 'spark' for the universe, or 'sparks' for individual lives. It shows the limitation that comes with manifestation, and

gives the idea that the spark fed with suitable fuel will be developed into the likeness of the Fire whence it came, and also that the spark is of the same nature as the Flame, the Supreme Brahman. That spark contains everything in latency, but nothing at first in manifestation. It has everything in germs but nothing at first as developed organism.

Into the matter brought into manifestation by Brahmā, Vishnu places not Himself with the force of His unfolded powers, but the seed of His life, capable of evolution, containing everything within it potentially, but showing forth nothing in manifestation. The germs from the life of Ishvara evolve step by step, stage by stage, all the powers that reside in the generating Father ; from that seed is to evolve a life rising higher and higher until a centre of consciousness is formed capable of expanding to the consciousness of Ishvara, while remaining as a centre still, with the power to come forth as a new Logos from whom new universes may evolve.

The building of such centres is the purpose of the evolution of life, the building being done stage by stage as the life passes from form to form, till the Son becomes what he has ever been potentially, one with the Father.

What issues forth from the Divine is only a mass of Monadic essence without individualisation, not human Monads, still less all-wise and all-good ones. The difference between its condition when issuing forth and when returning is exactly like that between a mass of nebulous substance and the solar system evolved out of it. The nebula is beautiful but vague and useless, while the sun formed from it by slow evolution pours down light and heat upon many worlds.

Speaking in more homely language, when we started on our long pilgrimage we were, as it were, asleep, but

having passed through numerous stages in all kinds of forms, we shall, at the end of our journey as man, have achieved the goal marked out for us during this age or dispensation, and become Adepts or Beings of goodness, power and wisdom, but our evolution will continue beyond that level till each one of us becomes a God.

Q. How did the Divine Life, in the first upward stage of evolution in the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, evolve in the germinal life the power to respond?

Ans. The whole working of the Life can be summed up as the receiving of vibrations from matter without and the answering of vibrations from itself within. In the mineral kingdom—in metals, stones and what is known as inorganic matter—the Life, the Monad of form, Ātma-Buddhi, the outbreathed Life of the Logos, has the capacity to respond, but in a limited manner, partly owing to its germinal nature and partly owing to the rigidity of its surrounding vehicle. “God sleeps in the mineral,” and so the brooding life of Vishnu modifies and softens the rigidity of its material and calls the inner essence into activity by blows, by vibrations, by tremendous impacts like earthquakes and volcanoes—the crushing and grinding of materials on a gigantic scale—until a stage of plasticity is reached with a lessened opposition from the form without and a more active response from the life within, when the beginnings of the vegetable world can be brought into existence.

After the life in the mineral has developed the power of response to outside impacts, the next stage in evolution, attained in the vegetable kingdom, is that the response takes on the form of sensation: the power of responding to the outside impact by a feeling within the

life, the sensation appearing as pleasure when the life responds to harmonious impacts from without, and as pain when the impacts are discordant.

Then we come to the stage which is manifested when life evolves through the animal kingdom. Pleasure and pain are now acutely felt, but in addition, a germ of recognition called perception, connecting objects and sensations, begins. The dawning life develops the power of forming a link between the object that impresses it and the sensation that responds to that object ; and when the life knows an object as giving pleasure or pain, *i.e.*, perceives the object, the faculty of perception, the making of links between the outer and inner worlds, is evolved, and mental power begins to germinate in that organism, as we find in the higher animals. But all along it is the evolving life which carries on from an outworn form, as well as from a lower kingdom of nature to a higher one—from the mineral to the vegetable, and from the vegetable to the animal kingdom—the experience which it has gained.

With the power of moving from place to place the opportunities of animals for gathering experience increase, as they can thus themselves come into contact with external objects, instead of having to wait, like the mineral and the vegetable, for the coming to them of those objects before responding to them. With the struggle for existence—the tremendous competition in nature for food—with the love of fellows which appears in the mother and father instinct, the leader instinct (bulls), and gregariousness, by vicissitudes, by hunting and being hunted, the animal develops craft, foresight, powers of self-defence, bravery and other higher qualities which eventually make possible the coming of man, though even when the

animal-man appears on the stage of life, there is something yet wanting for real manhood.

Q. Then is not man descended from the brute ? Is he not evolved out of the animal as the Darwinian theory asserts ?

Ans. That is not true. It is only a fragment of truth half seen and hence distorted. The matter of his lower vehicles has been prepared in previous ages by evolving through the lower stages of the elemental, mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms in order that it may be built into the form of man.

In previous cycles, forms had been evolved that might fairly be described as half-ape, half-human, that were never occupied by the triple-Self and that consequently belonged to the animal, and not to the human kingdom. In the present cycle the human form evolved, passing rapidly through the lower stages on the way to the human, as does a foetus in pre-natal life, and therefore has stamped upon it the stages through which it has passed. It will thus be seen that man is not merely a development from the animal as is believed by those who take the somewhat crude view of the theory of evolution. The matter has been made plastic in the animal, but the man in his form is the result of a higher working, and the germ of his life can never develop into the animal. It develops only into the human, as more life having been folded into it, that germ must unfold along a line of direct human growth. It is the Third Great Outpouring, the Third Life-Wave, which brings down those human spirits which have been waiting to take up their habitation in the forms prepared for their reception and to ensoul and utilise those bodies as explained before.

Q. Has each plant and each animal a separate soul like man ?

Ans. No. Each man is a soul, but not each animal or plant. When the Second Outpouring came from the Deity, it might have been homogeneous ; but when it first comes within practical cognisance on the Buddhic plane, it is seen not as one huge world-soul, but as many souls ; not one Monad, but many ; while in humanity it is seen broken up into millions of little souls of individual men ; so in the intermediate condition the world-soul is already subdivided, though not to its utmost limit of individualisation as found in man. Thus man as a soul manifests through one body at a time in the physical world, while an animal soul manifests through a number of animal bodies, except in the most advanced animals in a state of domestication, each of which has really become a separate reincarnating entity, although not yet possessing a causal body—the mark of what is usually called ‘ individualisation ’.

Q. Then what becomes of the animal or plant after death ?

Ans. When a man dies or lays aside his physical body, he, being a soul by himself, remains separate from other souls ; but when an animal, say a tiger, dies, he not being a permanently separate soul, that which formed his soul is, after some period of conscious life in the astral world, poured back into that mass, called a group-soul, from which it came and which provided souls for many other tigers. The true animal is not the body, but an invisible life which acts to the animal form as does the soul of man to man’s body. This invisible life, energising the animal form, is called the group-soul. The group-soul is a certain definite quantity of mental matter charged with the energy of the Logos ; this mental matter contains a definite life at the animal grade of evolution. An animal group-soul was in the previous cycle a vegetable group-soul,

and in the earlier cycle still, a mineral group-soul, so that any animal group-soul is already highly specialised as the result of its experiences in vegetable and mineral matter.

Each group-soul has attached to it a number of animal bodies, say one hundred tiger bodies for one particular group-soul. Then each of these tiger bodies has one-hundredth of a group-soul attached to it, and, like man, is quite separate during physical life, but that tiger is not a permanent individual, and, after death and the short astral life that follows it, has his soul merged back into his own group-soul.

This can be more easily conceived by an analogy. Suppose there is a bucket containing one hundred tumblers of water, the water representing the whole group-soul, and the hundred tumblers the hundred tiger bodies. Each tumbler dipped into the bucket takes out a tumblerful of water which takes the form of that tumbler and is separate temporarily from the water remaining in the bucket and from the water in the other tumblers. Now if some colouring matter is put into each separate tumbler, that represents the qualities developed by each of the separate tiger souls during his life-time. The death of the animal will be typified by pouring back the water from the tumbler into the bucket. But as the colouring distributed through the whole water in the bucket will be much fainter than when it was confined to one tumbler, the qualities of one tiger are shared after his death by all the tigers in the whole group-soul, though in a smaller degree. Also we can never get the identical tumblerful of water a second time from the bucket, while every tumblerful taken from it in future will give some trace of the colouring of all the different tumblerfuls of water poured back into it. Similarly, no tiger can be reborn with the identical portion of

the group-soul, while the qualities developed by a single tiger become the common property of all the tigers to be born from that group-soul in the future, though in a lesser degree than that in which they existed in the original tiger. Thus appear inherited instincts, the continually repeated experiences stored up in the group-soul, "accumulated hereditary experiences" in the new forms, and this explains why a duckling hatched by a hen takes to water without having to learn swimming, why a chicken just out of its shell will cower at the shadow of a hawk, and why a bird, artificially hatched, knows how to make a nest, without ever having seen one, according to the traditions of its kind.

Reincarnation, therefore, is in reality a process that affects all life in all organisms, though it is usually thought of as peculiar to the souls of men. The life of the rose that dies returns to its subdivision of the *Rosaceæ* group-soul, and then incarnates as another rose; the puppy that dies of distemper returns to its *Canidæ* group-soul and later incarnates as a puppy of another litter. With man the only difference is that, being an individual consciousness, he does not at death return to any group-soul, but reincarnates with all the faculties of his previous lives as his exclusive possession without sharing them with other individuals.

Q. How many physical bodies has each group-soul attached to it?

Ans. Countless millions of smaller insect bodies are attached to one group-soul, quadrillions of flies or mosquitoes, millions of rats or mice, hundreds of thousands of rabbits or sparrows; while a plant-soul has attached to it an enormous number of plant bodies, perhaps, in some cases of grass, a whole species.

The differences of climate and other variations in environment draw out of the individual forms differences of response in the indwelling life, according to the part of the country where that life is being manifested ; each form takes back to its group-soul a particular type of experience and tendency. As time passes and experiences accumulate, the group-souls gradually develop well-marked divisions and afterwards break up, each splitting into two, like a cell separating by fission, and again subdividing and splitting, so that higher up in the animal kingdom comparatively a small number of physical forms represents one group-soul. In fact, just as genera subdivide into species and families, so too does each group-soul slowly divide itself into smaller and smaller group-souls, containing more and more specialised characteristics and tendencies. In this way as the experience grows ever richer, the group-souls grow smaller but more numerous, until at the highest point we arrive at man with his single individual soul, which no longer returns into a group, but remains always separate.

Q. Does the evolving life begin from the lowest manifestation in each kingdom and end with the highest ?

Ans. The life-force goes through a definite course of evolution, ordinarily beginning from the lower manifestations of a kingdom and ending with the highest. In the vegetable kingdom, for example, the life-force might commence its career by occupying grasses or mosses and end it by ensouling magnificent forest trees. In the animal it might commence with mosquitoes or animalcula and might end with mammalia. Still if the group-soul or the life ensouling a group of forms or bodies has ensouled forest trees, when it passes into the animal kingdom, it will omit all the lower stages, not inhabiting insects or reptiles, but

will begin at the level of lower mammalia, while insects and reptiles will be vivified by group-souls which have left the vegetable kingdom at a lower level. Similarly, the group-soul which has reached the highest level of animal kingdom will not individualise into primitive savages, but into men of a somewhat higher type, while the primitive savages will be recruited from the group-souls which have left the animal kingdom at a lower level.

The whole process is one of steady evolution from the lower and simpler forms to the higher and more complex ones, but, as stated before, the evolution is primarily of life—differentiated into seven fundamental types or Rays—and not of form, though forms also evolve and grow better, mainly in order to be suitable vehicles for the more advanced life; and when that life has reached the highest level in the animal kingdom, it passes into the human kingdom by individualisation.

Q. What are the seven Rays or fundamental types into which the One Life differentiates itself?

Ans. All life comes from God, but it comes from Him through different channels. The Seven Spirits before the throne of God, His seven great Ministers, are very much more than mere servants or messengers; they are rather God's very members in and through whom He works, channels of His power, part of Himself. The Divine Life pours forth through these seven Ministers, and it is coloured by the channel through which it passes; through all its long evolution it bears the stamp of one or other of these mighty Spirits; it is always life of that type and of no other, whether it be at the mineral, vegetable, animal or human stage of its development.

Thus the One Life, long before it begins its work in mineral matter, differentiates itself into seven great

streams or fundamental types of life, called Rays, each of which has its own special and unchanging characteristics.

Hence it follows that these seven types are to be found among men and that all men must belong to one or other of them. Fundamental differences of this sort in the human race have always been recognised; a century ago men were described as of the lymphatic or the sanguine type, the vital or the phlegmatic; and astrologers classify them under the names of the planets, as Jupiter men, Mars men, Venus or Saturn men, and so on. But there is a better method of stating the basic differences of disposition due to the channel through which men happen to have come forth, and the special qualities or principal characteristics of each of the seven Rays may be given respectively as 1. Strength, Will or Power; 2. Wisdom; 3. Adaptability or Tact; 4. Beauty or Harmony; 5. Science (detailed knowledge); 6. Devotion; 7. Ordered Service (ceremonial magic which invokes angelic help).

In the Occult Hierarchy (see Chapter X) the seven Rays are clearly distinguished. The First or Ruling Ray is governed by the Lord of the World; at the head of the Second Ray stands the Lord Buddha; and under These come respectively the Manu and the Bodhisattva of the root-race which is predominant in the world at any given time. The Mahāchohan, parallel in rank with the last Two, supervises all the other five Rays, each of which nevertheless has also its own Head at the level of the Chohan Initiation.

The seven Rays have their expression and correspondences in the seven tones of the musical scale and the seven colours of the solar spectrum. Each of

these Rays influences the world in turn. The Sixth or Devotional Ray was dominant during the Middle Ages ; as its power waned, there was a period of disbelief, irreligion and profound ignorance of the inner side of life. The Seventh Ray involves the study and use of the inner forces of Nature, and intelligent co-operation with the Powers which wield them. That is the influence which is now dawning upon the world, and therefore the Seventh Ray is just now coming into operation.

The Fourth and Fifth Rays are predominantly positive or masculine, and the Third and Sixth Rays predominantly negative or feminine, while the Second Ray is dual but about equally balanced, the First Ray dual but with the masculine intensified, and the Seventh Ray dual but with the feminine intensified.

Each of these seven streams or Rays again differentiates itself into seven modifications, called sub-rays. These forty-nine variants of the One Life-stream follow their forty-nine distinct channels through all the great kingdoms, and there is no mingling of one type of life with another type.

Q. Now, how does the individualisation from the animal kingdom take place, and what is its method ?

Ans. The method of individualisation is to raise the soul of a particular animal to a level so much higher than that attained by its group-soul that it can no longer return to the latter.

The individualisation from the animal kingdom usually takes place through association with the humanity of the period. It cannot be done with every animal, but only with such as have their brains developed to a certain level, mainly through close contact with man.

All wild animals can be arranged into seven lines—the seven fundamental types of life or Rays, mentioned above—leading up to domestic animals, the fox, the jackal, and the wolf culminating in the dog; the lion, the tiger, the leopard, the jaguar and the ocelot leading up to the domestic cat, and so on. Individualisation is possible only from domestic animals, and at the head of each of the seven types stands some kind of domestic animal like the dog, the cat, the elephant, the monkey, the horse; and a group-soul, say, of two hundred foxes may divide at a later stage by breaking up, as explained before, into ten group-souls of twenty dogs each.

Now, a dog treated kindly unfolds intellectual powers in trying to understand and please his master, and develops affection for that human friend; while the thoughts and emotions of the master, constantly acting upon those of the dog, tend to raise him to a higher level intellectually and emotionally till the development has proceeded far enough to enable the dog to remain as a separate entity without his soul being poured back into the group-soul, and while doing so, to become a vehicle for the Third Great Outpouring. It is by the junction of this Outpouring with the fragment of the group-soul that the individual is formed; thus individualisation takes place by the Third Great Outpouring effecting a junction with the Second Great Outpouring.

This Third Great Outpouring from the First Logos, Mahādeva, does not affect thousands simultaneously, but comes to each one individually.

The specialisation of an animal out of a group-soul, say, of a dog out of a dog-group-soul, is due not only to the higher vibrations sent towards him from the dog's master and friends, but also to the fact that a Monad, "a

fragment of Divinity," is seeking to form an ego or soul in order to begin his human experiences. This Monad long ago attached to himself an atom of each of the planes as a centre on each, as an earnest sent in advance with a view to his future work. These permanent atoms, spoken of before in Chapter IV, were sent out into the elemental, mineral, vegetable and animal group-souls in succession, there to receive whatever experiences they could. When the permanent atoms find themselves in touch with a highly specialised part of the animal group-soul, like the soul of the dog, then the Monad sends down from his high plane certain influences in response to the outer work done for the soul of the dog by his human friends. Descending no lower than the Buddhic plane he effects a junction, like the formation of a water-spout, with the soul of the domestic animal who makes an upward leap from below. The energy of the Monad pours into the mental matter which has stood to the dog as his little soul; that mental matter rearranges itself into a causal body, to become the vehicle of this "Son in the Bosom of the Father" who has descended to become a human soul. Thus the soul-matter of the dog, the water in the bucket, mentioned before, becomes itself a vehicle for something much higher—for the Third Great Outpouring—and instead of acting as a soul, it is itself ensouled. There is no exact analogy on the physical plane except that of pumping air into water under high pressure and thereby making it aerated water. If that symbolism be accepted, the water which was previously the animal soul has now become the causal body of a man; and the air pumped into it is the ego—the soul of man which is but a partial manifestation of the Monad. This descent of the ego is symbolised in ancient mythology by the Greek idea of the *crater* or Cup, and by

the mediæval story of the Holy Grail ; for the Grail or the Cup is the perfected result of all that lower evolution, into which is poured the Wine of the Divine Life, so that the soul of man may be born. So what has previously been the animal soul becomes in the case of man what is called the causal body, which exists in the higher part of the mental plane as the permanent vehicle occupied by the ego or human soul. The young ego, the newly formed human soul, absorbs into himself all the experiences which the matter of his causal body has had, so that nothing whatever is lost, and he carries these on with him through the ages of his existence. Thus is formed in the higher mental world an ego, a permanent individuality, which endures through all incarnations till the man, transcending even that individuality, reaches back to the divine Unity from which he came.

From the time that the soul of a dog separates himself from his group-soul, the dog has in reality ceased to be a dog, though he has still a dog's form. From this point of separation up to the actual formation of the causal body there are several stages of transformation, until finally as a result of the increased outpouring from the higher planes by the Monad, the causal body is made. These stages can be hastened by the proper understanding by men of the process of individualisation, so that our animal friends may pass swiftly to the reception of that Divine Outpouring which makes of each a soul of man.

Q. Then what is the difference between the highest animal and the lowest man ?

Ans. At individualisation, all that has been the highest of the animal becomes now merely a vehicle for a fragment of Divinity, the Monad. In making the ego, the fragment of the group-soul which was always playing the

part of an ensouling force, becomes itself in turn the ensouled, for it builds itself into a form, a vehicle (symbolised as the Cup, the Holy Grail)—the causal body, a splendid ovoid of living light—which is ensouled by the ego, a fragment of the Monad, the divine Spark of the Third Outpouring from on high. That Spark was hovering over the group-soul in the Monadic world through the whole of the previous evolution, but was unable to effect a junction with it till the fragment of the group-soul in the animal had developed sufficiently to permit it. This breaking away from the rest of the group-soul and developing a separate ego with his causal body, marks the distinction between the highest animal and the lowest man.

There is an infinite gap in evolution between the highest anthropoid ape and the youngest individualised soul, and also a great difference between a highly domesticated animal and the lowest man; in the latter is the life of a Monad who is in reality an utterly different stream of energy and consciousness of the Divine Life from what is found in kingdoms lower than man, while in the former we have as yet only the higher manifestations of animal life.

Q. What, now, is the method of human evolution ?

Ans. Humanity evolves through successive races and sub-races, characterised by particular qualities that are wanted for the full growth of man. Men take birth in various root-races in turn in order that definite qualities may be developed within them. One race has some special characteristic with which it endows man; another has quite another characteristic as its object; and so man has to pass through these different stages for the purpose of developing certain qualities, learning certain lessons at

each stage, just as a boy at school goes from class to class learning something new in each one.

“ Man as yet is being made, and ere the crowning
age of ages
Shall not æon after æon pass and touch him into
shape ?
All about him shadows still, but while the races
flower and fade
Prophet-eyes may catch a glory slowly gaining
on the shade.”

Our world is inconceivably old, as now acknowledged even by science, and humanity has existed upon it for millions of years. If human bodies have been growing better, it is because the souls gradually evolving into ever higher and higher stages need a better class of vehicles for their expression. Each man comes forth from God, and when he has passed through thousands of different stages in all kinds of forms and become perfectly wise and perfectly loving, he will have completed his human evolution and be re-united with Him who is the Source of all Life within His universe.

“ As nine months go to the shaping an infant
ripe for his birth,
So many a million of ages have gone to the
making of a man.”

In the very heart of every religion, interwoven into its warp and woof, is the idea of evolution. For what is religion but the knowledge of God, of the Self, and this knowledge is reached through evolution. “ What religion a man holds, to what race he belongs—these things are not important; the really important thing is this knowledge—the knowledge of God’s plan for men. For God has a plan, and that plan is evolution.”

Q. What do you mean by a root-race and a sub-race ?

Ans. Root-races are gigantic divisions of humanity as the Lemurian, the Atlantean and the Aryan races, while sub-races are divisions of these, but still consisting of very large bodies of men. Sub-races in turn are divided into nations, and what are called branch-races.

In the history of a globe there are recurring cycles or successions of events—the shadows in our lower world of events on higher planes—which follow one another in a definite order, manifesting principles rather than details, and which are repeated in the course of history on larger or smaller scales. Each recurring cycle is the shaping and evolution of a new human type, embodying as its dominant characteristic one of the seven stages of consciousness of our humanity: 1—3. Vitality embodying itself in etheric and dense matter, the triple embryonic and birth stages; 4. the passional rising to the emotional (Kāmic); 5. the mental (Mānasic); 6. the purely rational (Buddhic); 7. the spiritual (Ātmic). The embodiment of each of these stages is called a root-race, and there are seven such in the life of a globe. Our physical bodies show out two subdivisions, dense and etheric. The first two races evolved these and were not yet definitely physical, while the third built the human form, with lower astral and germinal mental, by its middle stage. All that we read in books upon ethnology refers to the development of the Atlantean and the Aryan, the fourth and fifth root-races; but there was another which preceded the Atlantean race and to which the name of Lemurian has been given. This third root-race was concerned with the development of the physical body. The Atlantean race which succeeded it was concerned with the development of the astral or emotional body. The great Aryan race to which the majority of the population of Europe, India and

America belong, is concerned principally with the mental body—what we call the mind.

A root-race thus is a great type according to which the foremost peoples of the world are evolving. Within each root-race there are seven subdivisions or sub-races, each one of which represents in an incomplete and imperfect manner the characteristics which the corresponding root-race is to show in their perfection. The ultimate object of human evolution being the production of the perfect—all-round—man, that evolution goes on in this regular way : a race embodies the germs of several special qualities, while a sub-race develops specially one of these, dominating the other qualities, which are necessary in the man, separated for that purpose. Thus all root-races and sub-races are needed, and every one of them has its place in the ultimate perfect humanity which shall evolve on our globe.

Each of these great races predominates in the world for millions of years ; but they run concurrently to the extent that one begins before the other has finished ; so that although the Aryan race now rules nearly all the world, there are still vast numbers who clearly belong to the Atlantean race, and some few—the most backward of savages—who retain strong traces of Lemurian blood. The fifth or Aryan root-race as a whole, although it has existed in the world for sixty thousand years, is still not in its prime, and has a long time to run yet, probably a million years or so.

The beginning of a coming root-race is in the sub-race of its own number in the reigning race. Thus the fifth root-race grew out of the fifth sub-race of the fourth root-race, and the sixth root-race will grow out of the sixth sub-race of the fifth root-race. We are standing now in the primary stage of such a cycle recurring for the

sixth time. The third root-race, the Lemurian, and the fourth, the Atlantean, are far behind us, and the small cycle of the sixth sub-race, of the fifth or Aryan root-race, from which (sub-race) the sixth root-race is to arise, is already in the early stages of its growth in Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America.

We who are now human beings in this chain of globes ought all of us to become perfect, and to attain Adeptship and pass away from this scheme of evolution altogether by one of the seven paths which open out before the Adept, as explained in Chapter X, while what is now our animal kingdom ought by the end of this chain to attain individualisation, and therefore to be ready to furnish the humanity for the next chain, the fifth of our earth-scheme.

Q. What do you mean by a 'Chain of globes,' and a 'Scheme of evolution'?

Ans. Our solar system at the present moment contains ten chains, each consisting of seven globes, and these are all evolving side by side, though at different stages. A scheme of evolution is taking place upon each of these ten chains, and in the course of each scheme its chain of globes goes through seven incarnations. The globes of each chain present us with a small cycle of evolution descending into denser matter and then ascending out of it, and in an exactly analogous manner the successive incarnations of a chain also descend into denser matter and then ascend out of it. Our own chain is at the present moment at its lowest level of materiality, so that of its seven planets or globes three are on the physical plane, two on the astral and two on the lower mental. The wave of Divine Life passes in succession from globe to globe of this chain, beginning with one of the highest, descending gradually to

the lowest and then climbing again to the same level as that at which it began.

We may, for convenience of reference, label the seven globes by the earlier letters of the alphabet, and number the incarnations in order. Thus, as this is the fourth incarnation of our chain, the first globe in this incarnation will be 4A, the second 4B, the third 4C, the fourth (which is our earth) 4D, and so on.

As the number of globes on any plane which a chain has at any given time depends upon the stage of its evolution, these globes are not all composed of physical matter. 4A contains no matter lower than that of the mental world; it has its counterpart in all the worlds higher than that, but nothing below it. 4B exists in the astral world; but 4C is a physical globe and is in fact the planet which we know as Mars. Globe D is our own Earth, on which the life-wave of the chain is at present in action. Globe E is the planet which we call Mercury—also in the physical world. Globe F is in the astral world, corresponding on the ascending arc to globe 4B in the descent, while globe 4G corresponds to globe 4A in having its lowest manifestation in the lower part of the mental world. Thus we have a scheme of globes starting in the lower mental world, dipping through the astral into the physical, and then rising into the lower mental through the astral again.

Such is the condition of affairs in the fourth incarnation. But just as the succession of the globes in a chain constitutes a descent into matter and an ascent from it again, so do the successive incarnations of a chain; and therefore the third incarnation commences not on the lower level of the mental world, but on the higher. Globes 3A and 3G are both of higher mental matter, globes 3B and 3F of the lower mental, and globes 3C

and 3E of the astral, while only globe 3D is visible in the physical world. The corpse of this physical globe 3D, of the third incarnation—now long past—of our chain is still visible to us in the shape of that dead planet the Moon, whence that third incarnation is usually called the lunar chain.

The fifth incarnation of our chain which still lies very far in the future, will correspond to the third, though, of course, the planet 5D which will be in the physical world is not yet in existence. The other incarnations of the chain follow the same general rule of decreasing materiality.

Of the ten chains of our solar system, each existing with a scheme of evolution of its own, seven are represented upon the physical plane by one or more globes, but the three others exist only on higher planes. These seven are: 1—that of an unrecognised planet Vulcan, very near the sun, which is in its third incarnation and so has only that one visible globe; (the existence of Vulcan was accepted by some astronomers a century ago; but as it cannot now be found, the scientific men of the present day hold that the earlier observations were incorrect; in fact, it is said by some occultists that Vulcan is in its sixth incarnation;) 2—that of Venus which is in its fifth incarnation, and has therefore only one visible planet; 3—that of the Earth, Mars and Mercury, which has three visible planets because it is in its fourth incarnation; (a great bulk of the human race has passed through a series of incarnations on the planet Mars, and when our present occupancy of the earth ends for a time we shall all pass on to the somewhat less material life of the planet Mercury;) 4—that of Jupiter, 5—that of Saturn, 6—that of Uranus, all in their third incarnation; and 7—

that of Neptune and the two unnamed planets beyond its orbit, which is in its fourth incarnation, and therefore has three physical planets like our terrene chain.

In each incarnation of a chain (commonly called a chain-period) the wave of Divine Life moves seven times round the chain of seven planets, and each such movement is spoken of as a round. The time that the life-wave stays upon each planet is known as a world-period, and in the course of a world-period there are seven great root-races, divided into sub-races and the latter again subdivided into branch-races, as explained before. For convenience of reference this is stated in a tabular form, thus :

7 Branch-races	make	1 Sub-race
7 Sub-races	„	1 Root-race
7 Root-races	„	1 World-period
7 World-periods	„	1 Round
7 Rounds	„	1 Chain-period, or Incarnation of a chain.
7 Chain-periods	„	1 Scheme of Evolution, or Planetary Scheme.
10 Schemes of Evolution	„	Our Solar System

The fourth root-race of the fourth globe of the fourth round of a fourth chain-period would be the central point of a whole scheme of evolution, and we are at the present moment only a little past that point. The Aryan race, to which the majority of us belong, is the fifth root-race of the fourth globe, so that the actual middle point fell in the time of the last great root-race, the Atlantean. Consequently the human race as a whole is very little more than half-way through its evolution, and those few souls who are already nearing Adeptship (see Chapter X), which is the end and crown of this evolution, are very far in advance of their fellows.

Q. Now what are the first stages of the unfolding consciousness in man from the early beginnings ?

Ans. In the stage of the savage the consciousness of "I" and "Not I" slowly establishes itself within him. "Not I" touches him, and he feels it ; "Not I" gives him pleasure or pain, and he knows or experiences it. Thus commences intelligence, and a root of self-consciousness begins to develop ; a centre is formed to which everything goes in and from which everything comes out. After that an object is recognised as having given pleasure before, and a repetition of the pleasure is expected. That expectation is the dawn of memory and the beginning of imagination, the memory causing an outflow of desire to have that object and go forth in search of it.

An animal goes in search of food only when goaded by a feeling of hunger, but with the gratification of the desire he again becomes quiescent. The pull comes from outside. The savage was long in that animal stage, but now having memory of the pleasure, he desires that pleasure and goes in search of it, and his consciousness is thereby stimulated to activity by motion initiated from within instead of from without. Thus the gratification of desire is the law of his progress and evolution in the early stages. For him there is no morality, no distinction between right and wrong. Experience is the law of life. He cannot discriminate between right and wrong unless there be experience of both good and evil. Patanjali aptly terms the mind in this stage the 'butterfly mind,' darting from flower to flower with no stable purpose. But later the man finds out that he lives in a world of Law, getting pleasure when the Law is followed and pain when the Law is disregarded ; and thus with experiences of pleasure and pain he develops discrimination.

Then also come Teachers to help his evolution and tell him of the existence of the Law—what is right, what wrong, or, in other words, what is wise as being with the stream of evolution and what unwise as being against it. When he disregards the teaching, penalty follows and he suffers, as he was told by the Teacher. Thus the memory of a command proved by experience makes a great impression on his consciousness, and by the declaration of the fundamental principles of morality his intelligence is immensely stimulated. When he does not obey the declared Law, he is left to the hard teaching of experience and pain, and the lesson he would not learn from the lips of love is taught him by the whip of suffering till the desire for evil things is rooted out of his nature.

After this preliminary training, the great law of orderly evolution in later human growth is the law of the four successive steps which take a man to the end of his journey for this age or dispensation, and make him more than man.

Q. What is that law of the four successive steps for orderly evolution in the later growth of humanity?

Ans. That law comes into operation in every nation after a certain stage of evolution has been reached, but it was proclaimed in ancient India as a definite law of evolving life, as the underlying principle by which every one may understand and follow his Dharma—Dharma being the inner nature of a man at the point he has reached and the law of his growth for the next stage.

The first Dharma or duty is that of service, and no matter in which land a soul may be born, after the early stages the inner nature demands the discipline of service to acquire the qualities needed for the next stage. There is a tendency in such souls, called Shudras, to yield to

outside impulse without a developed judgment. It is the stage of confusion, of illusion, the "confused mind" of Patanjali. To this class belongs the serving type, the Shudra, and the law of his growth is obedience, devotion, fidelity. With little judgment of his own, his Dharma is blindly to obey the one he serves, like a soldier under the command of his superior, and he is not expected to show higher virtues.

Having learnt the lesson of obedience and fidelity in many lives, he approaches the next stage, that of the Vaishya or the old type of merchant, where the Dharma or duty is to take up an occupation and acquire wealth, thereby evolving the characteristics of just dealing, keenness, shrewdness, fair payment in fair exchange, frugality, etc. Liberality will be the law of further growth for the Vaishya, but not the liberality of carelessness or overpayment. He gathers wealth with energy and shrewdness and spends it with careful discrimination and liberality on noble objects and schemes for public good.

The third stage is that of the Kshatriya, or the ruler and the warrior, where the inner nature is combative and aggressive, ready to protect every one in the enjoyment of his right. His strength is the barrier between the oppressor and the oppressed, and right for him is the following of war and the struggle in the jungle with the wild beast. He develops courage, fearlessness, endurance, splendid generosity, devotion to an ideal, loyalty to a cause, throwing away of life in defence of the weak and in the performance of duty. During this stage when the outer vehicles are plunged into bloodshed, mutilation and death, the inner life is learning that there is something greater and nobler than the physical body and the physical existence. The man learns to sacrifice himself for an

ideal, recognising the service of an ideal as evolving the real life, and the body as a garment to be thrown aside at the call of duty.

Then comes the last stage, that of the Brāhmana, whose Dharma or duty it is to teach. The soul must have assimilated all the lower experiences before he can teach, and if he had not obtained wisdom through obedience, exertion and combat, through the three previous stages, how could he teach his more ignorant brethren? The hero or the martyr of former lives becomes now the Saint, the Seer, with worldly things detached from him. The law of his growth is knowledge, piety, forgiveness, gentleness, being the friend of every creature; while self-sacrifice is the fundamental law of his life, because though the struggle for existence is the law of evolution for the brute, the law of intelligent self-sacrifice is the law of evolution for man. His emotions will be pure and lofty, and his intellect well-trained with the mind steady and controlled. His moral nature will be noble and strong, and side by side with purity and mental strength for himself he will have a tender sympathy for others, and though himself beyond the power of suffering, will be able to enter fully into the pain of another by the remembrance of his own past. He will be able to control all his bodies and function on the higher planes and will give himself in joyfullest self-surrender to be a channel of the life of the Logos. With such perfection the end of his growth is liberation. He stands on the threshold of superhuman progress by the side of the lofty Beings, the Adepts, reaches the goal of humanity and becomes the Perfect Man. He has thus mounted the Ladder of Lives to the top-rung of human perfection, though many rungs lie still above with another and more splendid evolution opening out before Him.

Q. You have traced the broad outline of human evolution; but will you explain why man, divine in his origin, could not have remained pure and untouched by evil all through that process of evolution? Since God is good, why is there imperfection or evil in what He has produced? In short, what is the origin of evil and what is its use?

Ans. The One Existence—Brahman—is absolute and undivided; the One without a Second is absolute unity, absolute identity, without multiplicity or diversity, without conditions or limitation. But no manifestation can occur, no multiplicity can become, unless there be limitation. The very moment the universe comes into being, there must come in conditions, there must be limitation. Limitation is, in fact, a condition of manifestation, for the very moment we arrive at the point of manifestation, a circumference must be drawn from the central point, the circle of a universe; without that, thought is lost in the absolute oneness, the identity. Within that circle thought may be exercised, and the very word 'manifestation' implies at once this limitation. When that is understood, the next step is simple. Having diversity, having limitation, there is at once imperfection implied. The perfect is unlimited, the limited imperfect. Thus imperfection must be the result of limitation. In the totality there is perfection; in the whole, but not in the parts. The very moment there is multiplicity, variety of bodies, each body separately considered is imperfect, because it is less than the whole, and only the whole can have perfection predicated of it. Thus manifestation implying limitation, and imperfection being the result of limitation, imperfection is co-eternal with the universe. Imperfection, in short, is a necessary condition of limitation, so that whenever there comes a universe into existence, imperfection comes into existence

at the same time. The fact of manifestation is thus the origin of imperfection, of what is called evil.

Although the essence of imperfection is in the very existence of the universe, that which *we* call evil is its imperfection in its relation to the rest rather than the necessary imperfection of separated bodies. But in the very words 'good and evil' relativity is fundamentally implied, the 'pairs of opposites' necessary to thought; the word 'good' cannot fairly be predicated of anything until the idea of evil is recognised—the 'not-good'; good and evil are correlative terms, and the one can only be distinguished as being the opposite of the other—like light and darkness—which is implicitly present in the mind at the same time. In fact, evil does not exist in and by itself, does not reside in the things, but like good, lies in the relationship between one thing and another; it is relative, not absolute. What we speak of as evil in one place may not be evil in another; for evolution implies this changing character, and what is good at one stage may be evil at another.

When a man begins to understand what evolution means, he regards as 'good' all that is working in harmony with the Great Law, and calls 'evil' all that is working against it—all the tendencies which persist from the stage of evolution in which greater diversity was sought. 'Good' might therefore be defined as that which helps man forward in his evolution, 'evil' as that which hinders him. Therefore qualities now regarded as evil—avarice, desire for material gain, etc.—were good during the descent of the outward-going life into matter, or involution, as only by these could diversity be obtained, whereas now they are evil as retarding the process of integration, as checking the inward-flowing tide of life

towards the pole of Spirit. Again, man having evolved to a stage at which the infliction of pain on others is against his evolution towards the Divine Love, we call that infliction of pain a 'crime'. Also, selfishness which was necessary at one time for the development of individualism is now evil, because the selfish man is acting against the Law of Love and is reverting to a previous stage in evolution which he ought to have outgrown. In fact, selfishness is like the scaffolding which was useful when the building was under construction, but which is not only useless but even a hindrance after the completion of the building. Thus good and evil are purely relative terms, and we realise that that which is good at an earlier stage, is evil at a later one, and that conversely, that which is good at a later stage is undesirable at an earlier one, when man could not appreciate it and so could not be helped forward by it.

This retarding force of evil subserves many purposes. The life that is in us cannot manifest its higher capacities unless we are placed under conditions in which we have to struggle against opposition. Evil is, as it were, the weight opposing the muscle, and as we develop the body by struggling against the opposing external weight, so do we develop the moral character by struggling against evil which is the opposite of every virtue. Every virtue has its opposite evil. Truth and falsehood, courage and cowardice, compassion and hatred, humility and pride, are pairs of opposites. We can develop truth only by struggling against the false, by realising that in the world around us there is falsehood on every side of us ; and only by our efforts against it can we purify our nature from falsity and render true the life which we are developing. So also with every other virtue, with good in its totality. Courage is developed in the presence, not in the absence,

of an object which we fear. If there were no objects which give rise to the sensation of fear, then courage could never be evolved. Thus man could never develop strength to hold to the good, unless he gained it through conflict with evil.

Another fundamental use of evil is the evolution of the power to discriminate between good and evil, and thus of volition or choice. There could be no knowledge of good without the experience of evil, just as we should have no knowledge of light unless we at times experience darkness. There are these pairs of opposites throughout nature, and neither of the two opposing terms of a pair could exist without the other. We can distinguish Truth only by discerning it as different from that which is not true, and can learn its value only by finding from experience the destructive effects of falsehood, in man and in society. Thus, only by recognition of evil can we know good, and to recognise evil, experience of evil is necessary.

Useful also is evil as a scourge which drives us to good. For as evil is discordance with the evolving forces of the Divine Life in manifestation, it must result in pain. Hence evil inevitably brings suffering as a result, not by an arbitrary penalty but by an inherent necessity. Suffering in its turn gives rise to a feeling of repulsion towards the cause of suffering and drives man away from evil and towards good.

This being so, we should look with understanding and absolute charity on all forms of evil which surround us. If we see a human soul struggling in corruption and evil, we should feel no anger, intolerance or hatred, but should remember that, just because of the evil with which the soul is struggling, he will gradually gain strength enough to conquer it and at last become triumphant.

By making this a habitual attitude we shall come to realise that the Divine is in everything, in good and in evil alike; that as the *Bhagavad-Gita* says, the Lord is the gambling of the cheat as well as the truth of the truthful.

Q. You say that evil inevitably results in pain. What, then, is the meaning of pain, and what is its use?

Ans. The spiritual Self or the Monad—Offspring of the universal consciousness—is conscious on his own plane from the very beginning; but as he clothes himself in body after body of matter—the mental, the astral and the physical body—he becomes blinded by the veil of matter. Now it is this blinded self that comes into the manifested universe for the sake of learning and of gathering experience. He is drawn to all sorts of external objects. Some of these give him the sensation of pleasure and he is attracted; others the sensation of pain and he is repelled. This happens again and again until he finds that indiscriminate gratification of desire—over-eating or over-drinking, for example—is always followed by suffering, and when that experience has been repeated over and over again, this Spirit, which as mind is able to think, connects the gratification of the desire with the pain which follows on that gratification, and in this way gradually comes to understand, through repeated impressions on the infant mind, that there are laws in the universe connected with his physical body, and that when coming into contact with those laws he tries to violate them, suffering is the result. Thus with one object of desire after another this lesson is learnt, until an accumulated mass of experience is gradually gained by the Spirit, and he learns by pain to regulate his desires, no longer letting the horses of the senses gallop withersoever

they will, but curbing and reining them in, and permitting them only to go along the roads that are really desirable.

And so gradually by this process of education the knowledge of Law in the external world grows up, whereby the meaning of pain is seen to be hostile contact with Law, the effort to break a law that never can succeed—a law which will prove its existence by the suffering that is caused when the Spirit tries to fling himself against that barrier. Thus the first use of pain is the gain, through it, of the knowledge of Laws, and the consequent guiding and education of the lower nature by the reasoning intelligence.

A second use of pain is the gradual extirpation of desire. As we have seen, it is desire which draws the soul outwards to the external, and the education of the soul consists in this passing out into the external, gathering knowledge, and then by experience losing all taste for the external and carrying inwards the knowledge so obtained. But if the objects of desire remained desirable, there would be no end to the revolution of the wheel of births and deaths, no garnering of knowledge, and no real evolution of the higher possibilities. It is necessary, therefore, that the manifesting soul shall not only gather knowledge, but shall also carry it back with him and make it part of his own future being; and in order that this may be done, desire must gradually change its nature until at last it vanishes away. In the beginning, every desire, as the soul gratifies it, intensifies the pleasure; so he gratifies it again and again. But after a while he finds that the pleasure is transitory, for he cannot always be with the object of his desire, and separation from it brings pain. Further, the objects of desire are themselves transitory, and a time comes when they are taken away from him,

apparently for ever, and the pain is greater than before. Then again, even if they remain with him to the end of his life, he finds he cannot take them with him at his death, and again there is pain. Thus he learns to avoid those objects of desire which are found to be transitory, and to fix his desire on those which he believes to be permanent. But these, again, he finds to be only relatively permanent, and after a while they also pass from him and he suffers. Thus one after another the objects of the lowest external world, of each phase of the external world—subtle or physical—become undesirable to the soul that has gained knowledge; everything becomes undesirable save the Eternal, which is the essence of the soul himself: and so gradually the soul learns, by pain in the physical universe, to get rid of desire.

There is no other way in which desire can be conquered. The mere forcible abstaining from the gratification of desire is a very elementary stage of the progress of the soul. The very root of desire has to be cut off, and that can only be by the objects that once attracted losing their power of attraction, so that they no longer can draw the soul outwards; then the soul having exhausted everything that he can learn from the object, and having found it productive of pain in the end, no longer finds it desirable, but casts it aside, and, like a bee visiting the flower for honey, carries away the knowledge he has gained. And unless he can get rid of desire for the things of the physical world, he can never feel the inner drawing, first to the things of the mind, and then to those of the higher life, which is the very object of the soul's evolution.

The next lesson to be learnt through pain is the transitory nature of all that is not of the essence of the Spirit himself. There is no other possible means by which the soul

can learn this lesson and be led from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light, from death to Immortality. By disease and misery, by poverty and grief, he learns that everything which surrounds him—not only in the physical, but also in the region of desire and in the region of the mind itself—is transitory, and that in the changing he who is changeless may never find rest. In the early stage he finds that every form of suffering springs originally from the desire for some impermanent object, and ceases to give pain as soon as the desire is transferred to a higher object. So at first he turns from the sensuous to the intellectual, from the transient to the relatively permanent, and learns to cultivate the mind and the intelligence and the artistic side of his nature, instead of seeking the gratification of the senses which he has in common with the lower forms of animal life. Even here is a great gain. For the things of sense are limited, and men fight the one with the other in order to get their share of the limited quantity; but the things of the higher nature are practically unlimited, and no man is the poorer because his brother is richly gifted artistically or intellectually. In the region of intellect and of the higher tastes and emotions, all may share what they have, and find themselves, after the sharing, the richer and not the poorer for the giving. And so humanity progresses from competition to co-operation and learns the lesson of Brotherhood.

But even then it is found that satisfaction does not lie that way, for though a step upward, this drawing away of desire from the body to the mind, from the senses to the internal organ, from sensations to ideas and images, is still of the nature of desire. And by seeking gratification of desire, one never finds happiness, for every

desire that is gratified gives birth to a new desire ; and happiness does not lie in having more of the things one already possesses, nor in the increasing gratification of desires, but rather in the transmuting of the desire for the transitory into the aspiration for the Eternal, and the complete changing of the nature from that which seeks to enjoy to that which seeks to give. And thus after a while, by this absence of satisfaction, which is pain, the realisation comes to the soul that this is not the road, and he grows weary of the change. All the outer objects of body and of mind lose their attractive force. He went outward to the senses and failed ; then he withdrew into the mind, but the mind is outward from the standpoint of the Spirit, and again he failed. Always beaten back by pain and by the dissatisfaction that is the most wearisome pain of all, he finally learns his lesson, and from that which is without he turns to that which is within, treads the path which leads out of desire to the realisation of the Self, and finds the beginning of peace, the first touch of the real, of essential satisfaction.

Another use of pain is of a more inner character, for here pain can be used as an instrument to destroy personality. The soul has not yet got outside the reach of pain, for he is still seeking and has not quite found his centre. Although he knows that he is not the body, nor the senses, nor the mind, he still finds himself susceptible to pain that comes from within, of contacts that translate themselves as pain. And coming into contact with others—with the thoughts, feelings and judgments of others—he constantly finds himself pained by misjudgments and misrepresentations, by unkind thoughts and unkind feelings ; and having by this time gained

wisdom he asks himself: "Why do I still feel pain? What is there, not in the outside, but in *me* that gives rise to pain?" For he realises that nothing can touch him save himself, and that if he feels pain, it is a sign of imperfection, that he is not withdrawn wholly from the lower nature which is not himself. And then he begins to use pain instead of merely feeling it; he is no longer at the mercy of pain, but takes pain into his own hands as an instrument and uses it for his own purpose; when he finds this pain coming from unkind action, or from misjudgment of motive or of conduct, the soul takes the pain in hand as a sculptor might take a chisel, and with this instrument of pain he strikes at his own personality and cuts off his personal weakness, for he knows that if it were not for this personality which is selfish, he would not feel the pain at all, but would remain serene and untroubled amid the conflicts of the world.

And pain has still another use. The soul that means to be strong, not for himself, but for the helping of the world—the soul that knows that he can only learn to live for others if he is strong in himself—now deliberately chooses pain, because only thus can he learn endurance and patience. Those who never suffer always remain weak, and only in the stress and agony of combat does the soul learn to endure; and the strength gradually working in the soul, that which once was anxiety and struggle becomes the calm serenity of perfect strength.

And for one other thing will the soul choose pain—that he may learn sympathy. For even the strong soul would be useless if he had not learnt sympathy. Nay, the strong soul might become rather dangerous if he became strong without compassion and learnt to gather force without learning to guide that force aright. So the

stronger he is, the more eagerly will he seek this lesson of pain, in order that by feeling pain he may learn to feel for others, and that by his own pain he may learn how the pains of the world shall be healed.

Thus all kinds of pain that a soul has in his imperfection are, as it were, the stones with which the temple of the perfect Spirit is finally built. Pain in the end there will not be, though pain in the building there must be. But as the Spirit goes onward and grows freer, peace takes the place of struggle, and joy takes the place of pain. Moreover, pain lies merely in the sheaths in which the Spirit is clothed and not in his essential nature. The Spirit is bliss, not sorrow ; he is joy, not pain. And pain is passing, bliss is eternal ; for bliss is the inner essence of Brahman, the Self of all. " Of bliss are all things born " ; says the Upanishad, " in bliss they live, and to bliss they return."

CHAPTER IX

BROTHERHOOD

Question. Why is Brotherhood of Humanity made the one obligatory object of the Theosophical Society, the single "article of belief" binding on all the members?

Answer. The recognition of this principle of brotherhood intellectually and the endeavours to live it practically are very stimulative to the higher nature of man. To live it even to a small extent cleanses the heart and purifies the vision; to live it perfectly is to eradicate all sense of separateness. That recognition is the first step towards the realisation of non-separateness which is so necessary for the progress of a disciple, making him sensitive to the sorrows of all and training him in self-identification with the whole of humanity, in order that he may at last become a definite co-worker with God, with his entire nature dedicated to His purposes.

Q. But how can you establish the brotherhood of humanity? Looking around, it does not appear as if men were brothers, for we find them all ready to fly at one another's throats.

Ans. The brotherhood of man is not something which needs to be established. Brotherhood is: it is a fact in nature. It already exists and requires merely to be realised. No one can make a simpler or more perfect

declaration of it than the Christ, when He said: "One is your Father, even God, and all ye are brethren."

People deceive and kill one another, because they forget the truth of brotherhood, but men's ignorance does not change the laws of nature nor vary her irresistible march. Her laws crush those who oppose them. No nation can endure, no civilisation can last, that outrages brotherhood, and we have to attune our lives in harmony with that law.

Q. What is the basis of the brotherhood of man, and why do we not realise it though recognising it intellectually?

Ans. Human life is a portion of that one Father-life whereof we all are offspring. Sharers in one life, all form one brotherhood, the solidarity of man being one of the basic truths of Theosophy as already explained in Chapter I.

The intellect is a separative principle, spontaneously combative and self-assertive, its very nature being to assert itself as separate from others; and not on the lower planes with their sense of separateness and a conflict of interests can brotherhood be realised.

Q. Where then can brotherhood be fully realised?

Ans. Not on the lower planes, not even on the intellectual, but on the spiritual planes, the Ætmic and the Buddhic, can this brotherhood be fully realised as it has its foundation only there.

The self in man being a ray of the universal Self, Unity resides in that Self, and that unity is felt with perfect sympathy once the Buddhic plane is attained. When once a man becomes conscious on that plane at a certain stage of his pilgrimage, called the First Initiation, as explained in Chapter X, he actually realises the union of all living

beings ; nay, of all things, for everything has the same Divine Life within it. He then knows what he had hitherto only believed, and sees all things as himself and feels that all he has is as much theirs as his, nay, more theirs than his, as their strength being less, their need is greater than his ; and so Those whom we call the Masters, but who love better the name of Elder Brothers, have ever been marked by Their outwelling compassion and tenderness, using Their power to protect Their younger brethren, Their wisdom to guide them, Their strength to sustain them. That is the ideal, the perfect Brotherhood where Brother means a Servant of mankind.

Q. Does not brotherhood imply equality ? If not, how can there be brotherhood with inequalities all round among men ?

Ans. We know the motto of the French Revolution, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," where it is taken for granted that Liberty and Fraternity imply Equality. Now what is Equality ? If it be thereby meant that all men are equal in their origin and that every one, born of the divine nature, will, after having unfolded potentiality into power, ultimately reach the manifested Divinity, then in that sense Equality is true. But in the course of evolution, in the long changing struggle between spirit and matter, inequalities will arise ; while in Spirit all men are equal, in the flesh they are radically unequal.

Where is the equality between a man of genius and a fool, between a cripple and an athlete, between a saint and a savage ? Except in the rare instances of twins and triplets, brotherhood implies a difference in age of physical bodies and, consequently, differences in strength, in cleverness, in capacity, in duty ; and these differences, except that of age, are found even among twins and triplets.

Brotherhood implies a community of interest, all members of a family profiting if the family be rich, but the individual interests of brothers will be absolutely different. In a large family some brothers may be grown-up men working in the world, while others may be in the school-room, and others again in the nursery. But what interests has a boy of fourteen in common with his brother of four, and what cares the elder brother of twenty-four, fighting his way in the world, for all the prizes of school-life won by the second brother? Duty differs according to age, and every one striving to do his duty according to his state in life promotes the evolution of the human family as a whole.

Q. Then is there no sort of equality in the make-up of society?

Ans. In the building-up of society, the most that can be asked—because the most that is possible—is that there shall be equality of rich and poor before the law, so that no man may, artificially, by a man-made law or custom, be placed at an unfair disadvantage. Again, as far as possible, every man should be given equal opportunities, opportunities to develop every faculty he brings with him into the world, though it should be remembered that the radical inequality which no society and no human law can remove lies in the power to grasp an opportunity when it comes.

Q. What, then, is your conception of brotherhood in the social system?

Ans. We should build a social system where social service may be demanded from every member according to his capacity and social help given to him according to his needs, every man thus having the opportunity of developing every faculty he brings with him into the world. Thereby the brute law of struggle-for-existence will be

changed into the law of life—the social law of self-sacrifice for the quick evolution of humanity. As already stated, an Indian Master says: “The law of the survival of the fittest is the law of evolution for the brute, but the law of self-sacrifice is the law of evolution for man.”

In the light of that high ideal we see that inequality of age means inequality of capacity and power and therefore inequality of duty, and that the strong exist not for tyranny but for service, not for trampling the weak under foot but for protecting them with the tenderest compassion. To the spirit of brotherhood weakness is a claim for help and not an opportunity for oppression. Each age has its own duty, the younger to learn and serve, the older to direct and protect, all alike loving and helpful in the great family of humanity.

Q. But why is there inequality in different people and in different nations?

Ans. The inequality between different people is due chiefly to the age of the soul and, consequently, the stage reached by the soul in evolution. Some started their journey much earlier than others, and thus having had a longer time than their younger brethren, have unfolded more powers.

Nations are composed of souls mostly of a certain stage of development, who are born together to acquire certain experiences according to their karma and the stage reached by them in evolution.

We do not despise a flower because it is not yet the fruit, nor despise a babe because it is not yet the man; we do not despise ourselves because we are not yet as Gods, and so we need not despise baby-souls who are not yet as much developed as we are. In the ladder of human life we occupy the middle rungs with the Elder Brothers at

the top and the younger souls at the bottom, and the very word 'brotherhood' connotes identity of blood and inequality of development. Men shut themselves out from their brothers' hearts by differences of caste, creed, class, clan, country or colour, but the wise man rising above all those external differences sees all as part of his family, as children of one Father, with identity of essential life.

"Small souls enquire, 'Belongs this man
To our own class, kith or clan?'
But larger-hearted men embrace
As brothers all the human race."

Q. Is spiritual unity the only basis for the law of the Brotherhood of Humanity or do we find any indications of this law on the lower planes also?

Ans. First on the physical plane the particles of our dense bodies pass from one person to another, modified by the body in which they dwell for a time. We have seen in Chapter III that our dense bodies are made up of tiny lives or cells in a state of constant motion, which are continuously passing from us to the air outside and thence to other bodies, and are being replaced by cells from the bodies of others, and this constitutes a brotherhood of our physical bodies.

Similarly, we have seen in Chapter VII on Thought-Power that many of our desires, emotions and thoughts come to us from the unseen vibrations radiating from other astral and mental bodies, and being modified for better or for worse by their passage through our vehicles, pass out again to affect others.

Thus we are all along influencing other people in the three lower planes by what we are, by what we say and do, and by what we desire and think, and are in turn being influenced by them. We are all inextricably linked

together, and no one can advance or recede without helping or hindering the progress of others, thus disclosing a true unity in humanity amidst all its apparent diversity.

Q. But do we find this principle of brotherhood worked out in the ancient or the modern world ?

Ans. The ancient ideal of Kingship was drawn from the perfect example of the Great White Brotherhood of liberated Spirits, the Masters, and from that recognition of the Elders during the childhood of the root-races of the world we come to the historical facts of Divine Dynasties and Divine Kings in Egypt, India and China, where the life of a king who knew that " the tears of the weak undermine the throne of kings," was not the life of pleasure and enjoyment, but of service and sacrifice. Still by many of the great Empires of the later past, built on a foundation of selfishness, on a foundation of the misery of the masses of the people, Brotherhood was denied. And now these ancient Empires, Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt, Greece, Rome, have all passed away ; only one contemporary nation, India, remains, because in her literature she taught the law of Brotherhood. But India ceased to live out that law in practice, and that marked the beginning of her decline in later times.

Q. But did not ancient India by her system of castes preach and practise inequality rather than Brotherhood ?

Ans. It has already been explained that Brotherhood does not imply equality. The old theory of castes was based on the law of Brotherhood, which recognised inequality in the age of the soul and the consequent inequality of development. It is on this truth that differences among the various castes and classes of society rest, brothers of different ages in the human family having different duties, occupations and responsibilities.

The Shudra who serves, being a young and undeveloped soul, was the younger child in the National household, and there is no humiliation in being a younger child in a family. By the Vaishya, the merchant, the householder of the Nation, wealth was to be acquired, but in order to be dispensed for supporting the other Orders in the State and for worthy and noble causes. Charity is still ingrained in the Vaishya, though all that is wanted at present in that charity is to change its direction—to build schools and universities and to train the youth in religion and morality, instead of building lofty temples, of which there are already too many in the land, and which, owing to want of proper education, would perhaps be deserted by those youths when they grow up. Then came the Kshattriya, the warrior, with his right to splendour and enjoyment, but also with a duty to sacrifice everything—life, family, love—in protecting the people. Lastly came the Brāhmana, the teacher, pure in conduct and ascetic in life, who was not to be wealthy save in wisdom. But now there is all confusion in caste and the Brāhmana is seldom a teacher. The Law of Brotherhood is denied to one-sixth of the population—the “untouchable,” the sweeper and the scavenger—which is left in foulness and degradation. The Law of Brotherhood was the pivot of ancient Indian society in all her splendour, but her practical denial of that law for her outcaste population has brought on her the penalty of decay.

We must realise the duty and the responsibility which lie upon us of improving both the surroundings and the characters of our younger brethren in the depressed classes by every means in our power. We should use our knowledge of the higher laws in their favour, thus enabling them to shorten their stay in this low stage of evolution.

By teaching their children the elements of right living, we draw out and cultivate the powers of the soul, while by checking and repressing the faults as they become manifest and improving their food and environments, we help them to build better bodies for the habitation of the more unfolded souls. This is the help we both can and ought to give to these our successors on the stage of the world, and small will be our claim to the help of the Greater Ones if we refuse our help to these little ones of the human race. We dare not plead to the Lords of Compassion to stoop to us and help us to rise, unless we, in our turn, stoop to those below us and seek to raise them up.

In London one-tenth of the population die in the work-house, the prison and the hospital, but England still tries to do her duty to her outcaste population by educating them, by building houses for them and by giving them decent living and short hours of work. Justice being the divine law, India by making outcastes of her younger children is herself enslaved.

Q. How does the recognition of this principle of brotherhood as a definite fact affect our attitude towards those around us ?

Ans. With the recognition of brotherhood our attitude towards all around us changes radically and becomes a posture ever of helpfulness and deepest sympathy, for we see that the true interests of all are in fact identical and that nothing that clashes with their higher interest can be the right thing for us to do.

We also naturally become filled with the widest possible tolerance and charity, because our philosophy shows us that it matters little what a man believes so long as he is good and true, and because our wider knowledge enables us to make allowance for many things and to

comprehend more of human nature, as we realise how the sin appeared to the sinner at the moment of its commission.

We thus feel not only sympathy, but positive love, towards all mankind, and adopt an attitude of watchful helpfulness, as we feel that every contact with others is for us an opportunity to help or advise them with the additional knowledge acquired through our study.

Q. How can we hasten the realisation of this brotherhood in physical life ?

Ans. Though that realisation is fully attainable only on the Buddhic plane as explained before, we can hasten it on the physical plane by altruism. But we shall have to keep in mind that different brothers need different kinds of help owing to their inequality of development, and that it is of greater importance to help our brother to grow than to save him from some physical suffering.

Extensive schemes of social reform are useful in their own way and also in educating public opinion by bringing vividly before the minds of men the suffering in which their less fortunate brothers are living, but greater good can be done by efforts to help persons individually. We should try to study each individual who wants help, find out his ideal, and showing him how to realise it put before him an ideal slightly higher. We can thus help him and accelerate his growth by showing him how he can help himself and by giving him our loving sympathy and encouragement.

Q. What is our duty as brothers to those above us, those on a level with us, and those below us in the great family of humanity ?

Ans. We cannot know the measure of the burdens of our Elder Brethren as we are yet too weak and too ignorant to understand Them ; still we can make that burden

less and lighten some of the load by yielding to Them ready obedience, loving service and unfailing devotion until we become strong and wise enough to share consciously in Their glorious work.

Towards our equals we should have an attitude of friendliness, implying trust and good faith, breaking down the barriers of pride, distrust and suspicion between strangers, and thus encouraging people of different nationalities with help, sympathy and comradeship to get rid of prejudice and to see the good in other nations.

As regards our younger brethren, *e.g.*, savages, occupying less developed bodies than ourselves, we should show them justice and kindness when we come into contact with them; while as regards the lower classes in our own land, we should see that they do not starve, but earn enough money honestly to live a decent life. They should all be guided, helped and protected as they have a right to be on account of their younger soul-age.

Q. Is there any special reason for emphasising Brotherhood in the Theosophical Society?

Ans. It is important that all members should realise a close fellowship, a feeling of real unity by forgetting their personal feelings and interests, as the heart of the society is making for itself a body on the Buddhic plane as a channel for the Great Masters of the Wisdom to work through. That channel is as yet imperfect, as each member thinks too much of himself individually and too little of the good of the whole.

The two Masters connected with the founding of the Theosophical Society, Master Morya and Master Kuthumi, will shortly commence the work of starting the new root-race and are looking for suitable assistants in Their work; and only those devoted and earnest members,

who recognise and realise a close fellowship and a feeling of real unity, can hope to have the privilege of being chosen to serve Them.

Again, different nations require to be drawn together in brotherly feeling to prepare the way for the forthcoming advent of the World-Teacher—the Bodhisattva of the Buddhist, the Christ of the Christian, the Shri Krishna of the Hindu, the Lord Maitreya, the great spiritual Teacher whose teaching shall unify all religions.

Q. Are we united only to the human family by ties of brotherhood ?

Ans. As explained in Chapter VIII on Evolution, there are six other kingdoms in nature, and we are closely linked with all of them. The life sustaining our physical bodies has passed through all these kingdoms and has there built up more and more evolved and complicated forms which have eventually developed into human bodies. Not only that, but we are dependent even now for our very existence on the work of these lower kingdoms, especially of the vegetable and the animal kingdoms.

Again, we share the Divine Life, not only with every human being, but with every animal, plant and stone, and even with every particle or atom in all kingdoms, with everything that is. The Divine Life is the spirit in everything that exists from the atom to the archangel, as explained for 'the Immanence of God' in Chapter I, and thus the inner unity, the One Life dwelling equally in all, shows that there is not only a Brotherhood of Humanity, but an all-embracing fraternity, a universal brotherhood in nature.

Professor Overstreet, while trying to show how the conception of God is gradually changing from that of an extra-cosmic judge to that of an immanent presence

—"the figure of myriad lives, and yet of one vast group-life, in ceaseless activity; . . . a God, in short, that is the world in the spiritual unity of its mass-life"—says: "The genetic sciences are everywhere convincing us that there is no fundamental break in continuity between the lower animals and man, that, as Forel states it: 'All the properties of the human mind may be derived from the properties of the animal mind,' and that therefore 'the doctrine of evolution is quite as valid in the province of psychology as it is in all the other provinces of organic life'. There remain two great steps still to be taken. Below the animal is the plant; below the plant is the so-called inorganic . . . We have rid ourselves of the notion of a difference in kind between the human and the lower animal, we are increasingly doing so between the animal and the plant . . . The inorganic may be at or near the lower limit of variation . . . If this should prove to be true, then the inorganic is fundamentally the same in kind as the most advanced forms of life."

Q. How, then, can we help our younger brethren in the lower kingdoms?

Ans. Our lives are closely bound with the animal and the vegetable world, and so first we owe a fraternal duty to the vast animal kingdom which surrounds us. Our attitude towards our younger brethren should not be one of harshness, injustice and thoughtlessness or of cruelty for self-amusement and personal gain, but that of protection and guardianship with gratitude for their service to us. They are brought in relation with us in order that we may do something in fostering the budding mentality within them, as well as raise them to a higher level emotionally and thus quicken their individualisation. We should also refuse to share the sin of slaughter by eating meat or fish,

or by wearing articles obtained only by the slaughter of animals, like sealskin or feathers of birds.

Nature-spirits or fairies and gnomes work out the wonderful forms of the mineral and the vegetable world under the direction of the Great Builders of the Universe, and our duty to these kingdoms lies in thinking of those spirits with friendliness and in forbearing from thoughtlessly injuring their work. Moreover, plants and flowers have the beginning of an astral body with the power of feeling pleasure and pain, as explained in Chapter VIII, and we should carefully abstain from injuring those living things.

We have a duty even towards lower forms of life than the mineral, *i.e.*, the elemental essence which surrounds us everywhere and forms the three elemental kingdoms. That essence progresses by means of the effect which we produce upon it by our thoughts, passions, emotions and feelings, and our duty towards those kingdoms will be fully discharged only if we carry out our higher ideals and see that our thoughts and emotions are of the highest possible type.

Q. Finally, what is our individual duty as regards Brotherhood in general ?

Ans. We should realise that the very condition of the spiritual life is to see the same Self dwelling equally in all.

As regards our younger brethren in the lower kingdoms, that duty has been already explained.

In the human family we ought to remember that the Self dwells in the most degraded as well as in the purest. No obstacle should therefore be placed in the way of anyone attaining his highest growth, but facilities should be given to all to develop every faculty brought by them into the world. All are members of one family with different duties, and we should not despise or look

down upon our fellow-workers, however humble their work ; these should rather be thought of more lovingly as they do the more unpleasant work. Essentially one in life, the whole of humanity forms one body, and poison in any part, even the lowest, may paralyse the whole body. We can make no real gain at the cost of someone else, while any benefit or advance in the path of spirituality is something secured not for us alone, but for all. We should ever maintain towards those around us an attitude of helpfulness and deep sympathy, and of the widest possible tolerance and charity, nay, of positive love all around.

It is the law of the Spirit that, unlike Matter, which perishes in the using, it lives by giving, and increases by using. Truth never diminishes in the sharing. Knowledge, if not shared, becomes a cancer in the brain, but if we share it with our ignorant brethren, the torch of knowledge might light a thousand other torches without any diminution in the original flame. We are pure only in order to go to the impure, for real purity can never be stained or soiled, though it may purify others and lift them to a higher standard. So the law of the Brotherhood of Humanity lays on us a duty—to raise the sinner and the debased to our own purity, to teach the ignorant, to rescue the miserable, to feed the starving, to nurse the diseased. Parts of one brotherhood, we live in and for others, influencing all and being influenced by them. We cannot slip a single step backward without weakening the whole of humanity, nor rise one step higher without lifting the whole towards purity. We should therefore strive to work for the good of the whole human family with perfect peace and harmony.

CHAPTER X

THE MASTERS AND THE WAY TO THEM

Question. What is a Master ?

Answer. There are Perfect Men, called Adepts, with Divinity unfolded in Them—human beings who have completed Their human evolution and have nothing more to learn so far as human experience in our chain of worlds is concerned ; who have reached what the Christian calls ‘salvation,’ and the Hindu and the Buddhist ‘liberation’ ; and who having trodden the ordinary path of men have climbed the steeper Path which rises to the super-human state. The Path which we have to tread They have already trodden, and reached its furthest point, having passed from Initiation to Initiation and widened out Their Consciousness, till They know not only this, but all the five worlds up to Nirvāna. A conception of evolution implying a gradual expansion of consciousness embodied in ever-improving forms underlies the conception of Adeptship, and at the apex of such a long evolution stands the Adept, embodying in Himself the highest intellectual, moral and spiritual developments, possible to man. The One Eternal Light is in *all* of us ; only *He* has cleansed the glass and learnt to manifest that light. He has learnt all the lessons of humanity and acquired all the experiences the world can give. Beyond this, evolution is superhuman.

A few of these great Adepts, though free from the wheel of birth and death, voluntarily take up the burden of the flesh and live in physical bodies on earth for the helping of men, and take pupils who, forsaking all, desire to evolve more rapidly than the bulk of their fellow-men in order to serve humanity unselfishly. Such Adepts are called Masters. A Master is a man made divine, an Elder Brother sharing the same humanity, but elder by the greatness of His evolution. A Master must be in a physical body and should, as the name implies, take pupils—or rather apprentices—less advanced men, to tread the road which takes them by a short cut to the summit of human evolution. Many other Adepts who reach this level no longer take human bodies, but using only the spiritual body pass out of touch with this earth, while again there are others at this level who are concerned with other lines of service to the world.

Q. How can you show Masters as facts? What is the evidence of Their existence?

Ans. There are some to whom even the ideal of Masters is valuable and inspiring though they do not know Them as facts, for high is the ideal of Mahātmās, *i.e.*, Great Spirits.

First, then, taking the existence of Masters as a theory, it is a probable theory on the lines of natural evolution; for if evolution were true and reincarnation a fact, there must be such men somewhere. Considering the enormous difference between the lowest savage and the highest man of to-day, and also considering the space of time for evolution that has elapsed since man first trod this earth, it is not improbable that the evolution of some individuals has carried them as much above the higher civilised man of to-day as

the latter is higher than the lowest type of savage in existence. Again, looking backwards we find traces of mighty civilisations which show that there must have existed men of a most advanced type to start them.

Then there is the testimony of religions, for there is no great religion that has not founded its belief on a Divine Man as its Founder and does not look back to its Teacher as to a Man divine in His life.

Again, there is the historical evidence of religious Scriptures with a depth of spiritual knowledge, of philosophic thought and of insight into human nature, greater than what the greatest minds of our time can produce. This is not a question of tradition, but of books; not a question of theory but of fact; and these books with teachings of morality so pure, philosophy so sublime, and knowledge so vast, must have had authors. Those authors were the Divine Men in the past who have left the testimony of Their existence in mighty and sublime literatures with Their teaching identical in its main outlines and its moral force.

There is, furthermore, the testimony of first-hand experience, for there are many men in India and elsewhere, who have personal knowledge of the Mahātmās, of the Masters who train Their pupils in the higher path of what is called the Rāja, or the Kingly, Yoga—the Yoga which primarily trains the mind rather than the body and which works by concentration of the mind, by meditation, and by the evolution of the higher mental faculties. The wonderful book, *The Secret Doctrine*, and the masterpiece of prose-poems, *The Voice of the Silence*, were written by H. P. Blavatsky, as she herself declared, with the help of such Teachers and are in themselves the best testimony to the sources whence they came.

But if a man wants first-hand evidence, absolute demonstration of Their existence, he will have to pay the price and will have to take the trouble of being trained, of acquiring knowledge and wisdom and of treading the Path which the Masters Themselves had to tread before They became Members of the Great White Brotherhood.

Q. What is the Great White Brotherhood of which a Master is a Member, and what is the object of its existence ?

Ans. Each globe within the solar system has a body of Ministers and other mighty Officers of the Solar Logos who carry out His Plan and form the Occult Hierarchy or Inner Government for that globe. Similarly, our world is under the control of a definite Spiritual Government, carried on from the higher plane, invisible to the physical eyes, and there is, beyond and behind all physical happenings, a mighty Hierarchy of graded order, in the hands of which lies the government of the world. It is the Members of the Occult Hierarchy who guide all evolution, administer the laws of nature and direct the affairs of the world. They are in a graded order, ruling, teaching and guiding the world, each rank having its multifarious duties and carrying them out in perfect harmony. They are the Guardians of our humanity and are the true Rulers of men and worlds, of whom the earthly kings, teachers and guides are but the shadows or the symbols. They set up and pull down the so-called leaders of the people ; They select and reject the candidates for high offices ; kings and statesmen, generals and politicians are the pawns in Their mighty game. The game is evolution, and its end is the redemption of humanity from ignorance into Knowledge, from darkness into Light. " Guardians of the World " They are sometimes called, because the world is divided into areas,

each of which is under the care of a Member of the Hierarchy.

As the Logos, when in manifestation, works as a Trinity—the First, the Second and the Third Logos, Shiva, Vishnu and Brahmā, or the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost—so the Occult Government of the world is in three great departments, and the representation for our world of that Great Triangle, “eternal in the Heavens,” is another Triangle, composed of the three Departmental Heads, who are not merely reflections of the Three Aspects of the Logos, but are in a very real way actual manifestations of Them. They are the Lord of the World, the Lord Buddha and the Mahāchohān who have reached grades of Initiation (to be explained presently) which give Them waking consciousness on the planes of nature beyond the field of evolution of humanity, where dwells the manifested Logos. The Lord of the World is one with the First Aspect on the highest of our seven planes and wields the Divine Will on earth or brings down to humanity the energies of the Ātmic or Will or Power Aspect of the Logos; the Buddha is united with the Second Aspect which dwells on the Anupādaka plane, and distributes to the world the Wisdom Aspect, which is incarnate, as it were, in Vishnu; the Mahāchohān is utterly one with the Third Aspect, which resides on the Nirvānic plane, and exercises the divine Activity, *i.e.*, is the channel of His Divine Mind, Creative Activity, for our world.

The first and second Members of this great Triangle are different from the third, being engaged in work of a character that does not descend to the physical plane, but only to the level of the buddhic body in the case of the Lord Buddha, and the Ātmic plane in that of the great Agent of the First Aspect. Yet without Their higher

work none of that at lower levels would be possible, so They provide for the transmission of Their influence even to the lowest plane through Their Representatives, the Manu Vaivasvata and the Lord Maitreya, respectively.

These two great Adepts stand parallel with the Mahāchohān on Their respective Rays, both having taken the Initiation that bears that name, and thus another Triangle is formed, to administer the powers of the Logos down to the physical plane.

The three departments or groups in the Spiritual Government, ruling, teaching and guiding the world under its inner Spiritual Head who is the King and Monarch of our world, are sometimes called the Groups of Rulers, Teachers and Guides.

The first, the Ruling Department—the Department of Laws—guides outer evolution, changes the face of the surface of our globe, builds and destroys continents, controls the destiny of nations, and shapes the types and courses of races of men—each race bringing out its characteristic qualities and gradually contributing its share to the final perfection of humanity. This first group, of Rulers, acts by Will-Power, which in its lower form is Ichchhā or desire. Will and Power are the natural characteristics of the Rulers and it is the force of the Will, by which the Occult Rulers of the world work. The Lord of our world is the supreme Head of the Hierarchy as well as the Head of the Ruling Department or the Group of Rulers. He rules not humanity alone, but all the visible and invisible kingdoms of the earth—the mineral, vegetable, animal and human kingdoms, as well as the vast realms of the elementals and the nature-spirits and the grand and glorious kingdom of the Angels. Under the direction of this august Head and His three Lieutenants—the Mighty Four—the One who builds up a

particular race and is the Representative, in that race, of the Ruling Department, is the mighty Being from whom our very name of 'man' is drawn. He is the Manu, the Ideal Man, the type of each race as it is gradually built, the perfect man of every race, who gradually develops in the race the qualities embodied in Himself. And as the name Man means the thinker, the reasoner, so this name of the typical man, the Manu, stands for the Ruler, the Law-giver of the Race. The Manus are specially related to the evolution of races. There is only one Manu to a race, and there is always a Manu at work whenever a great race is to be born into the world. He directs the physical development of the race, forming the new race-type by modification from that already existing, according to the Plan of the Logos set before Him by the Lord of the World, guides its migrations, gives each people its polity and directs each to do its appointed work. His term of office begins with the slow gathering of the egos who are going to work under Him at the commencement of the new race, and through all the successive sub-races as they appear one by one. During the hundreds and thousands of years of the history of a root-race, He directs the building of variant after variant of the sub-race, and Himself incarnates in each sub-race to set the form for it.

The second or the Teaching Department—that of Religion and Education—is under the Lord Buddha, as stated before, who, as the Head of the Second Ray in the Occult Hierarchy of our globe, devotes Himself to that part of the work which lies in the higher worlds and entrusts the work for the lower planes to His Assistant and Representative, whom we know as the Founder of every faith, the Inspirer of every prophet, the Guide of spiritual

evolution, the Master of Masters, the World-Teacher, the supreme Teacher of Angels and men. He is known as the Jagat-Guru (World-Teacher) among the Hindus, and as the Boḍhisattva (He whose essence is wisdom) among the Buddhists. The World-Teacher watches over the emotional and intellectual development of His race, and arranges for each people such religions, arts and sciences as shall enable it to play its rôle in the drama written by the Logos. He definitely undertakes as His work to look after the religious welfare of the world and its education along evolutionary lines; guides, blesses and maintains the various religions of the world, founded in outline by Himself; appoints one of His assistants as the special Guide or Protector of a special religion—His own benediction flowing ever upon all the living religions of the time—and manifests from age to age to inspire a new religion, to strike anew the note of a fresh chord of spiritual life, to proclaim the ancient message in a new form in the world of men. As the races are built into the final perfection of humanity, so the religions also are built to bring about, one by one, the great qualities which are needed in spiritual evolution, until both outer and inner perfection shall crown the working out of the mighty Plan, made by the Divine Architect for our humanity. This second Group of Teachers acts by Jñānam or Knowledge. Having, as Teachers, the detailed knowledge of our world, They act as the channel of the Wisdom Aspect of the Logos, so that when a new type of man is formed by the Rulers, the Teachers step in to teach that new type and to help it to evolve. As the Ruling Department shapes the material destiny of man and his earth, so does the Teaching Department shape the spiritual destiny of man.

The third great Group, the Group of Kriyā or Activity—the Department of Guides—carries on all the activities of our world, outside the ruling and the teaching, under the Mahāchohan who is the great “Keeper of the Records” of the evolutionary processes of the globe, and who supervises and directs all the activities of the Members of the Great Brotherhood, as They develop stage by stage the great Plan.

For the entire period of a root-race the Manu works out the details of its evolution, and the Bodhisattva, as World-Teacher, Minister of Education and Religion, helps its members to develop whatever of spirituality is possible for them at that stage, while the Mahāchohan directs the minds of men so that the different forms of culture and civilisation shall be unfolded according to the cyclic plan. Head and Heart are These, and the Hand with five fingers, all active in the world, moulding the Race into one organic being, a Heavenly Man.

The Logos, a Trinity in activity, has an aspect of Him as the Unmanifested. Similarly, behind the Great Three—the King who rules, the Prime Minister who plans, and the General who executes—is a Fourth, the Silent Watcher, who in the last Round was the Lord of the World of our globe, and now “watches and waits” behind the Three, doing for man and God mighty actions which are incomprehensible to our present limited human consciousness.

On the Path of Holiness a man has to pass through four stages before attaining to the level of the Asekha or Adept, which is the goal set before humanity during this chain-period to become free from the necessity of reincarnation. Seven paths then open before Him for His choosing: He may enter into the blissful omniscience and

omnipotence of Nirvāna, 'taking the Dharmakāya Vesture'; He may enter on 'the Spiritual Period,' 'taking the Sambhogakāya vesture'; He may become part of that treasure-house of spiritual forces on which the Agents of the Logos draw for Their work, 'taking the Nirmānakāya vesture'; He may remain a Member of the Occult Hierarchy which rules and guards the world in which He has reached perfection; He may pass on to the next chain, to aid in building up its forms; He may enter the splendid Angel or Deva Evolution; He may give Himself to the immediate service of the Logos—join the 'Staff Corps of the Logos'—to be used by Him in any part of the Solar System. Thus a limited number of Those who have attained the Asekha level still work directly for humanity and are divided into two classes, Those who retain physical bodies and Those who do not. The latter, spoken of under the name of Nirmānakāyas, suspended, as it were, between this world and Nirvāna, devote Their time and energy to the generation of spiritual forces poured into a kind of reservoir for the use of the Members of the Hierarchy in Their work of helping humanity.

The still more limited number of Adepts who retain physical bodies remain in close touch with us, doing all the work necessary for our evolution, and it is these Supermen who form the Occult Hierarchy. They are a small number of advanced men of different nations, not living together, though in continual communication on higher planes. In many cases They continue to live each in His own country, and Their powers remain unsuspected among those who live near Them.

The Great White Brotherhood includes the Occult Hierarchy of Adepts as well as the initiated disciples—

disciples who have passed through one or more of the four great Initiations—official examinations with subsequent expansion of consciousness at each stage—to be explained presently, and who live and labour for the most part unknown in the everyday world, carrying on the work assigned to them by their superiors.

The four lower grades consist of initiated disciples ; the grade of the Master is the fifth in the Brotherhood, reached at the fifth of the great Initiations, that which gives 'liberation' or 'salvation'. The grade beyond the Masters is entered, as are all the grades, by its own Initiation, the sixth or the 'Chohān' Initiation—a Rājput word used as a title of respect, like the English word 'Lord' applied to a judge or a bishop. These great Beings, the Chohāns, guide all the forces which make for evolution in our world, and the countless Intelligences that guide and shape these are under Their direction. There are seven main lines of evolution, seven Rays, spoken of before, and the Chohāns are concerned with these, with a Chohān as the Head of each Ray, while the Masters work under Them, each in His own group, or in the line along which He has evolved. Then the seventh of the great Initiations qualifies for the higher offices, those of the Manu, the Bodhisattva and the Mahāchohān. An Adept of the First Ray who takes the seventh Initiation usually enters thereafter upon the arduous duties of a Manu of a root-race on a globe. After His work as Manu is completed, He passes on to take the eighth Initiation as a Pratyeka Buddha, and æons later to take the ninth Initiation, that of a Lord of the World. The Tenth Initiation is the one taken by the Silent Watcher in the Great White Brotherhood.

The Buddha Initiation is the highest achievable on this earth on the Second Ray, and it is taken by a Bodhi-saṭṭva or World-Teacher as the crown of His work of ages for humanity. Of the other five Rays from the third to the seventh, the highest Initiation as a member of this humanity is that of the Mahāchohān. This office is held only by one Adept at a time, and according to the dominant influence in evolution, at any given epoch, of a Ray and its sub-rays, is the type of the Adept who holds that exalted office.

The object of the existence of the Great White Brotherhood is to do God's Will by carrying out His Plan, which is evolution, and all the members of that Brotherhood work in true hierarchical order, according to their qualifications, each having his work in a particular department of the Plan. Into the hands of the Adepts of the Brotherhood the Logos commits His Power, Wisdom and Love, and They distribute the energy of the Logos into all the many departments of human activity. Religion and philosophy, science and art, culture and civilisation, are inspired and guided by Them; either incarnating among men, or from the invisible, They move men and nations as pawns on a board, striving to win men over to co-operate with the Divine Plan which is the evolution of humanity as a whole in the solar system.

Q. Can you say something of the Great Ones in this Occult Hierarchy? Where do They live?

Ans. 1—4. 'The King' and His three Pupils.—'The King,' the Lord of the World of our globe, is not an Adept of our humanity; the position which He fills is too high to be held by an Adept of our human evolution.

About six and a half million years ago, during the middle of the third—the Lemurian—root-race, there arrived on our earth a band of Great Ones from the planet

Venus which is considerably further advanced in evolution than our earth-chain. With the Leader of the band came His three Lieutenants and twenty-six other Adepts as assistants. Most of these Great Ones, called Lords of the Flame and Children of the Fire-mist, also Sons of the Light and Sons of the Fire, have long ago done Their work of helping our evolution and have passed away from our earth, but Their Leader—the Great Ruler of this world under the Solar Deity—still holds the position of the King who guides and controls all evolution upon our planet and represents the Logos as far as this world is concerned. Within His consciousness is recorded everything which happens on all the seven planes of our globe. Since His mighty aura interpenetrates and surrounds the entire earth, He is aware of all that happens within that aura, and no act is so secret but He knows. Without approval of the King—the One Initiator—none can be initiated into the Great White Brotherhood, and it is His Star which flashes in assent over the head of the Adept-Initiator. When that “Star of Initiation” so flashes out, it is not sent there by an effort of His will, because it was already there. His mighty aura, the influence of His power, surrounds the whole globe; but when for purposes of His own He chooses to make that tremendous power manifest at a certain spot, that portion of the mighty aura flashes out for a moment in the likeness of the Star, the symbol of His immanence for our earth.

In His mind He holds the whole Plan of evolution at some high level of which we know nothing; He is the Force which drives the whole world-machine, the Embodiment of the Divine Will on this planet; and strength, courage, decision, perseverance and all similar characteristics, when they show themselves down here in the lives

of men, are reflections from Him. In His hands are the powers of cyclic destruction, for He can deal directly with cosmic forces outside our chain of worlds. His work is probably connected with humanity *en masse* rather than with individuals, but when He does influence any single person, it is through the Ātmā, and not through the ego, that His influence is brought to bear.

At a certain point in the progress of an aspirant on the Path, he is formally presented to the Lord of the World, and those who have thus met Him face to face speak of Him as a handsome youth in appearance, dignified, benignant beyond all description, yet with a mien of omniscient, inscrutable majesty, conveying such a sense of resistless power that some have found themselves unable to bear His gaze, and have veiled their faces in awe.

Hindu tradition calls Him Sanat Kumāra, the "Eternal Virgin-Youth," for His body, though physical, is not born of woman, but was made by Kriyāshakti or will-power, and it never ages, and He is in appearance not a man but a "Youth of sixteen summers". Round Him stand the Four Great Devarājāhs or the Rulers of the Elements, who adjust the Karmas of men, and the great Devas and Angels are His courtiers, ready to do His bidding.

During each world-period, there are three successive Lords of the World, and the present Holder of the Office is already the Third. Once in every seven years He conducts at Shambāllā a great ceremony, when all the Adepts and even some Initiates below that grade are invited, and have thus an opportunity to come into touch with Their great Leader. At other times He deals only with the Heads of the Official Hierarchy, except when for special reasons He summons others to His presence.

With Him are His three pupils and Lieutenants, named Sananda,⁷⁹ Sanaka and Sanātana in Hindu tradition, who too came from Venus. When the life-wave shall pass from Earth to Mercury, it is these Three who will become in turn Lords of Mercury, and guide all evolution on that globe. Popular Buddhism speaks of Them as Pratyeka Buddhas, the "Solitary Buddhas". They are given this name because They stand at the level of the Buddha or Supreme Teacher. And because They did not teach or establish world-religions, Their work being that of the Rulers and not of the Teachers, men in their blindness, dimly groping after the fact of this superhuman existence, spoke of Them as solitary Buddhas—alone, isolated—and even went so far as to apply to Them the monstrous adjective 'selfish'. Their love is as great as that of the Buddhas, but belonging to the First or Ruling Ray, They give to men Power, and not Wisdom as done by Those belonging to the Second or Teaching Ray.

The Hindu Purānas speak of these Kumāras—"the Four", "the One and the Three"—as living in an oasis in the Gobi Desert, in the mystic city of Shambāllā, which is often spoken of as the White or the Sacred Island, in remembrance of the time when it was an island in the Central Asian Sea, and which is part of Central Asia, very carefully guarded from intrusion, but still existing.

5. The Lord Gautama Buddha.—The present Buddha is the Lord Gautama who took His last birth in India about two thousand five hundred years ago, and in that incarnation finished His series of lives as Bodhisattva, and succeeded the previous Buddha Kasyapa as Head of the Second Ray in the Occult Hierarchy of our globe. Seven Buddhas appear in succession during a

world-period, one for each root-race, and each in turn takes charge of the special work of the Second Ray for the whole world, devoting Himself to that part of it which lies in the higher worlds, while He entrusts to His Assistant and Representative, the Boḍhisattva, the office of World-Teacher for the lower planes.

Our present Buddha was the first of our humanity to attain that stupendous height, the previous Buddhas having been the product of other evolutions. A very special effort was needed on His part to prepare Himself for this lofty post, an effort so stupendous that He is spoken of constantly by the Buddhists as the *Mahabhinishkramana*, the Great Sacrifice. Many thousands of years ago there arose the need for one of the Adepts to become the World-Teacher of the fourth root-race, for the time had come when humanity had to provide such a Teacher for itself or go unaided ; but we are told that no one had quite reached the level required for the incurring of so tremendous a responsibility. The first-fruits of our humanity at that period were two Brothers who stood equal in occult development, One being He whom we now call the Lord Gautama Buddha, and the Other our present World-Teacher, the Lord Maitreya. Out of His great love for humanity the Lord Gautama instantly offered to make Himself ready to undertake whatever additional effort might be necessary to attain the required development, and life after life He practised special virtues, each life showing out some great quality achieved.

After His nomination as Boḍhisattva He came many times as a great Spiritual Teacher and incarnated under different names through a period spreading over hundreds of thousands of years. Little is known of His work in the fourth root-race, but He came several times to

the sub-races of the fifth or the Aryan root-race, and used a symbol a little different each time, but always enwrapping the same fundamental Truth.

To the stock of our race, the first sub-race of the Aryans, the Great One came in Central Asia, about 60,000 B.C., under the name of Vyāsa, and gave in that far-off time the Sanātana Dharma, the Eternal Religion, the Wisdom Religion with its Vedas and its Purānas, and taught the one truth by the figure and symbol of the Sun; that the Sun in the heavens—the visible symbol of the Godhead—and the Sun in the heart of man—the Self individualised in him—were both identical, that Self is one, “the Person in the Sun,” that all selves are rays of that Sun, and that man must find the Reality within himself ere he can know it as a certain truth outside him.

To the second sub-race He came in ancient Egypt and Arabia about 40,000 B.C., under the name of Tehuti or Thoth, known later in Greece as Hermes—Hermes Trismegistes, the Thrice Greatest—who was called the Father of All Wisdom. He then clothed His message in the symbology of Light, and said that the Light in the heaven above us is identical with the Light in the heart within us, and that when men have once seen the Light in their own hearts, then they can look abroad and see it everywhere in heaven and earth.

To the third sub-race—the Iranians—who founded the mighty empire of Persia lasting from 30,000 B.C. to 2,000 B.C., He went about 29,700 B.C. under the name of Zarathushtra, better known as Zoroaster—the first and greatest of the twenty-nine Zoroasters—and garbed the one truth in Fire—Fire in the heart of man, Fire in the temple for the worshippers, Fire in the sky that gave light to the world. Zoroaster was the Messenger of the Fire, drew

down Fire from heaven, was caught up, when His mission was over, in a cloud of Fire and rapt away from the sight of men.

Once again he came to the fourth sub-race—the Keltic, the ancient Greeks and the Romans—about 7,000 B.C., and now as Orpheus He spoke in Music, and by the mysteries of Sound and Harmony, He taught the unfolding of the Spirit in man.

Then the Great One returned to earth but once more, this time to the original root-stock, transferred from Central Asia to India by constant migrations between 18,875 B.C. and 9,700 B.C. His life then on earth as Siddhārtha Gautama has been wonderfully told in Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia*. Born in 623 B.C. as Prince Siddhārtha of the Gautama clan in Northern India, He became an ascetic, counted all worldly things as dross, wandered in the forest for six years to seek the Cause of Sorrow and the Ending of Sorrow, got final illumination under the Sacred Tree at Gayā, became a Buddha, an Enlightened One, and founded the Buddhist religion, which, with about five hundred million followers, still outnumbers any other faith on earth. The attaining of Buddhahood is a definite step, and when a World-Teacher takes that step and becomes a Buddha, He passes away from this globe into wider fields of work. So when after teaching for some forty-five years of life, proclaiming the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path and the Triple Gem, and drawing round Himself all those who in previous lives had been His pupils, Gautama Buddha passed away from earth in 543 B.C., He handed over His office of World-Teacher to His beloved Brother who had come side by side with Him through many ages, the Lord Maitreya, the Great One who is the World-Teacher of

to-day, and is honoured through all India under the name of Krishna and whom Christendom calls the Christ.

We are told that because of the great strain of many ages of effort there were certain points in the work of the Lord Buddha which He had not time to perfect utterly. It is usual for a Bodhisattva when He has lived His final life and become a Buddha—when He has entered into glory, bearing His sheaves with Him, as it is put in the Christian Scriptures—to hand over His external work *entirely* to His Successor, and devote Himself to His labours for humanity at higher levels. Whatever may be those manifold activities of a Dhyāni Buddha, they do not bring Him again into birth on earth; but because of the peculiar circumstances surrounding the life of the Lord Gautama, two supplementary acts were performed.

The first was the sending by the Lord of the World, the One Initiator, of one of His three Pupils, who are all Lords of the Flame from Venus, as stated before, to take earthly incarnation immediately after the attainment of Buddhahood by the Lord Gautama in order that by a very short life spent in travelling over India He might establish certain centres of religion called *mathas*. His name in that incarnation was Shankarachārya—not he who wrote the commentaries, but the great Founder of his line, who, more than two thousand years ago, founded a certain school of Hindu philosophy, revived Hinduism by putting new life into its forms and by gathering together many of the teachings of the Buddha, forbade animal sacrifices and accomplished certain occult work in connection with the higher planes of nature, which was of considerable importance to the later life of India.

The second supplementary act was undertaken by the Lord Gautama Himself. Instead of devoting Himself

wholly to other and higher work, He has remained sufficiently in touch with His world to be reached by the invocation of His Successor when necessary, so that His advice and help can still be obtained in any great emergency. He also undertook to return to the world once in each year, and to shed upon it a flood of blessing. The occasion selected by the Lord Buddha for giving this blessing to the world with a wonderful outpouring of His own special type of force is the full moon day of the Indian month of Vaishākh (called in Ceylon Wesāk, and usually corresponding to the English month of May), the anniversary of all the momentous occurrences of His last earthly life—His birth, His attainment of Buddhahood, and His departure from the physical body.

In connection with this visit of His, and quite apart from its tremendous esoteric significance, an exoteric ceremony is performed on the physical plane, on a small plateau surrounded by low hills, on the northern side of the Himalayas, near the frontier of Nepal and about four hundred miles west of the city of Lhasa, at which the Lord Buddha actually shows Himself in the presence of a crowd of ordinary pilgrims.

After the performance of certain ceremonies by the Lord Maitreya and other members of the Great Brotherhood, "the Lord Buddha appears as a gigantic figure floating in the air just above the southern hills." "The Figure which floats above the hills is of enormous size, but exactly reproduces the form and features of the body in which the Lord last lived on earth. He appears seated cross-legged, with the hands together, dressed in the yellow robe of the Buddhist monk, but wearing it so as to leave the right arm bare. No description can give an idea of the face—a face truly God-like, for it combines calmness

and power, wisdom and love in an expression containing all that our minds can imagine of the Divine. We may say that the complexion is clear yellowish-white, and the features clearly cut; that the forehead is broad and noble; the eyes large, luminous and of a deep dark-blue; the nose slightly aquiline; the lips red and firmly set; but all this puts before us merely the outer mask and gives but a little grasp of the living whole. The hair is black—almost blue-black—and wavy; curiously it is neither worn long according to Indian custom nor shaved off altogether in the manner of Oriental monks, but is cut off just before it reaches the shoulders, parted in the centre and swept back from the forehead. The story is told that when the Prince Siddārtha left home to seek the truth, he seized his long hair and cut it off close above his head with a sweep of his sword, and that ever afterwards he kept it at the same length." The order in the bands of colour in the aura of the Lord, as He thus appears floating in the air, is this: after intense white light nearest to the Figure, blue, yellow, crimson, white, orange-red and the five colours in their order radiating laterally. That aura, spoken of in Chapter III, is described in Oriental Sacred Books as including people who were three miles from Him when last He was on the physical plane.

Though the Lord thus shows Himself *before* the pilgrims, it is not known whether He shows Himself *to* the pilgrims; they all prostrate themselves at the moment when He appears, but that may be only in imitation of the prostration of the Adepts—some of whom generally materialise Themselves so as to be seen by the pilgrims—who *do* see the Lord Gautama. It is probable that some at least of the pilgrims have seen Him for themselves, for the existence of the ceremony is widely known among the

Buddhists of Central Asia, and it is spoken of as the appearance of the Shadow, or Reflection, of the Buddha.

All members of the Great White Brotherhood, except the King Himself and His three Disciples, usually attend this ceremony, and any earnest Theosophist can be present at it in his astral body by so arranging matters as to put his physical body to sleep an hour or so before the exact moment of full moon, and to be undisturbed until about an hour after it.

6. The Lord Maitreya.—The Lord Maitreya took up the office of Bodhisattva when the Lord Gautama laid it down. One of His first steps at that time was to take advantage of the tremendous magnetism generated in the world by the presence of the Buddha, by arranging that great Teachers should simultaneously appear in many different parts of the earth ; so that within a comparatively short space of time we find not only the Buddha Himself, Shri Shankaracharya and Māhavira in India, but also Mithra in Persia, Lāo-tse² and Confucius in China and Pythagoras in ancient Greece.

Twice He has Himself appeared—as Krishna in the Indian plains, and as Christ amidst the hills of Palestine. First He came to His ancient people in India twenty-five centuries ago, and founded that cult which even now holds within it the vast majority of the Indian people. Manifesting as Krishna—that marvellous Child of eastern stories who is an embodied Love—He provided a supreme Object of devotion for those to whom Bhakti (devotion) is the most direct road to the truth. The first time that each World-Teacher comes, He is born in the usual way, though subsequently He generally takes a body prepared for Him by a pupil of special purity and spiritual development ; and so coming as Shri Krishna

He naturally did take birth as a little child ; but His life on earth was then very brief, for He passed away as a youth. Still so marvellous was His out-welling love, so exquisite His compassionate tenderness, that even those few years of mortal life have changed, as it were, the whole aspect of Hinduism, and have made it a religion of Devotion whereas before it was rather a religion of Knowledge. Through high philosophy and intellectual thinking, India was losing her faith in devotion, and the work of the Supreme Teacher then consisted specifically in making her what she is to-day—a land where the divine Form of Shri Krishna holds the hearts of two hundred and fifty million people captive in chains. This incarnation as the Child Krishna—the Krishna of the Gopis—who appeared in Braja about 500 B.C., is different from that of Shri Krishna of the Mahābhārata, about 3,000 B.C., though in both cases it was the Lord Maitreya who appeared, having been overshadowed, in the earlier incarnation, by the then Bodhisattva, the present Lord Buddha.

Five centuries later He came again, but was not born as a Child. All Christian legends which centre round the childhood belong to the Master Jesus, not to the Lord Christ. The duality of Jesus and the Christ is a very, very old idea. The Gnostics taught it in the early century of the Church, and the Manichæans held it among many others.

In the record of the New Testament we find the story of a Hebrew youth, born about a century before the beginning of the Christian era, trained partly in Egypt, and partly in the monasteries of the Essenes, coming forth at about the age of thirty to be a teacher among his people. On him descended the Spirit of the Holiest, and descending on him it abode, and that moment of descent

was the coming of the Christ to occupy the chosen body which He had selected for His stay on earth. This is described in the New Testament as the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, when there came down upon him this new Power—that is, when the Lord of Love took over the body of the disciple—and he was thenceforward known as Jesus the Christ. It was after this that the Ministry began, and the Lord Himself then preached and healed, and gathered disciples. Very probably He did not hold the body all the time, but may well have left it at times to the original occupant who, in such cases, always stands by as an attendant.

After a brief life of three years among men in the days of Queen Salome, a life of uttermost beneficence, wondrous healings and exquisite teaching, the body in which He had dwelt was murdered by a terrible stoning during a riot in the city of Jerusalem, in the very court of of the Temple itself, and afterwards taken up and hanged in mockery on a tree by those who had slain Him. The death of the physical body did not interrupt the work of the Christ, as He continued to teach His disciples, visiting them in His subtle body, for over forty years, probably for many more.

In the incarnation of the Bodhisattva as Krishna, the great feature was always love ; and again in His birth in Palestine, love was the central feature of His teaching. He said: " This new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you." His closest disciple, S. John, insisted most strongly upon the same idea: " He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is Love."

Even so long ago as 22,605 B.C., as the High Priest of the great Atlantean religion, the Lord Maitreya preached

the doctrine of love which is so characteristically His own, telling all the pilgrims to a certain holy city in Yucatan the emphasis that must be laid upon that quality : " Love is life," He said, " the only life that is real. A man who ceases to love is already dead. All conditions in life are to be judged fortunate or unfortunate according to the opportunities that they offer for love. Love will come under the most unlikely circumstances, if men will but allow it to come. Without this all other qualifications are only as water lost in the sand."

The ordinary Orientalists in the West do not understand why the ' Krishna-cult,' with its unbounded devotion and perfect self-surrender to the Object of love, which suddenly sprang up five centuries before the Christian era, is, in many points, so very like Christianity ; why it has so much said in it of divine grace, of the helping of man by God, of the lifting up of the helpless and the sinner. They cannot understand how these strange likenesses to Christianity appear in a pre-Christian form of worship. They do not dream that the secret lies in the fact that it is the same Lord of Love who is the central Object of devotion in both, who is worshipped under the name of Krishna in India as He is worshipped in Christendom under the name of Christ.

The Bodhisattva also occupied occasionally the body of Tsong-kā-pā, the great Tibetan religious reformer, about the fourteenth century A.D. Though as the Lord of the Religions of the World, He is responsible for all the religions in the original form in which they were founded, He does not always go out personally into the world, but sends some of His disciples, for minor activities. Hence throughout the centuries He has sent forth a stream of His pupils,

including Nāgārjuna, Āryasanga, Rāmānujāchārya, Mādhvāchārya and many others, who founded new sects or threw new light upon the mysteries of religion, and among these was one of His pupils who was sent to found the Muhammadan faith.

In the person of the Lord Maitreya the influence that is especially noticeable is the radiance of His all-embracing Love. He is wearing a body of the Keltic race at the present time, though when He comes forth to the world to teach His people, as He intends to do very shortly, He will make use of a body prepared for Him by one of His disciples. "His is a face of wondrous beauty, strong and yet most tender, with rich hair flowing like red gold about His shoulders. His beard is pointed, as in some of the old pictures, and His eyes, of a wonderful violet, are like twin flowers, like stars, like deep and holy pools filled with the waters of everlasting peace. His smile is dazzling beyond words, and a blinding glory of Light surrounds Him, intermingled with that marvellous rose-coloured glow which ever shines from the Lord of Love."

The aura of the Lord Maitreya in its normal condition is about two and a half miles in radius. The arrangement of the bands of colour in this aura is different from that in the aura of the Lord Gautama. The heart of the aura of the Lord Maitreya, the "Buddha of Compassion", is blinding white light just as in the case of the Lord Gautama, the "Buddha of Wisdom"; but in the former, after the central white light, come in succession the bands of rose, yellow, vivid green, blue and violet, and outside the violet again a broad band of the most glorious pale rose, into which the violet imperceptibly melts; outside of all comes the radiation of mixed colours,

just as in the case of the Lord Gautama, or of any Master or even Arhat.

A point which seems worthy of notice is that in the aura of the Lord Maitreya the colours come exactly in the same order as in the solar spectrum, though orange and indigo are omitted. First the rose (which is a form of red), then the yellow, shading into green, blue, violet, in succession. And then it goes on into the ultra-violet, melting into rose, the spectrum beginning again in a higher octave, just as the lowest astral follows upon the highest physical.

“We may think of Him as seated in the great front room of His house in the Himalayas, the room with many windows, that overlooks the gardens and the terraces and, far below, the rolling Indian plains; or in flowing robes of white, edged with a deep border of gold, as walking in His garden in the cool of the evening, among the glorious flowers, whose perfume fills the surrounding air with a rich, sweet fragrance.”

This garden is on a southern slope of the Himalayas, overlooking a vast expanse of the plains of India, which stretch away to the far horizon. It is sheltered, lying in a hollow, and protected by a pinewood at the back which curves round on the right. Beyond this wood, and a little eastwards, is the very ancient stone house, with pillared and wide verandah, wherein dwells the Manu of our Race, the great Lord Vaivasvata.

Now is the time ripe for the Lord Maitreya to appear again on the physical plane, and He will surely come, within a very few years—“come quickly”—and it is stated by those who know that the same mode of manifestation will take place in the present day, that the Great Teacher is even now preparing for His coming

by training one of His disciples to serve Him as Jesus served Him long ago, and that He has already chosen twelve Apostles who will, as of yore, first surround Him and then carry His message to the outer world.

7. The Mahāchohān.—He is the Chief of the Guides, the Head of the third great Group, and all who work on the five out of the seven lines of evolution for our world—the seven Rays—outside the Ruling and the Teaching, are in subordination to Him, so that everything may be quite orderly, and all the Groups may co-operate in the evolution of the world as a whole.

The Mahāchohān is the type of the Statesman, the great Organiser, though He has also many military qualities. He wears an Indian body, and is tall and thin, with a sharp profile, very fine and clear-cut, and no hair on the face. His face is rather stern, with a strong, square chin; His eyes are deep and penetrating, and He speaks somewhat abruptly, as a soldier speaks. He generally wears Indian robes and a white turban. His aura has been observed to have a radius of two miles in its normal condition.

8, 9. The Manus, Lord Chākshusha and Lord Vaivasvata.—Only two Manus now remain with our humanity, the Manus of the fourth and fifth root-races. The Lord Chākshusha Manu who founded the fourth root-race, the Atlantean, over a million years ago, is still charged with the care of the larger part of the population of the globe and looks after those hundreds of millions of Asiatic peoples—the fourth-race nations—of whom the chief are the Chinese, the Japanese, the Burmese and the Siamese.

The Manu Chākshusha is a regal figure, Chinese by birth, and of very high caste. He has the high

Mongolian cheek-bones, and His face looks as though it were delicately carved from old ivory. He generally wears magnificent robes of flowing cloth-of-gold. As a rule old pupils of Masters do not come into contact with Him in their regular work, except when it happens that they have to deal with a pupil belonging to His root-race.

The Lord Vaivasvata Manu is the Manu of the Āryan or the fifth root-race. A million years ago, He began the slow process of selection of likely members for His far-off race. About 100,000 B.C. He drafted these into a tribe and, in order that His work may be started definitely, He separated it off from the then existing fifth sub-race of the Atlantean or the fourth root-race. He led off His people, in 79,797 B.C., from an island in what is now the Atlantic Ocean, took them across Africa to Arabia, and settled them there for a time. Later on, He led and settled His infant Race by several migrations on the shores of the Gobi sea, now a vast desert in Asia. A fairly satisfactory type was reached after many troubles and massacres, and from 60,000 B.C. onward that fifth root-race grew and flourished exceedingly.

Vaivasvata Manu sent off many great emigrations from time to time and often led them Himself. With one of these, He built up the second sub-race in the empires of Arabia and South Africa, about 40,000 B.C.; and with another, the third sub-race in Persia, about 30,000 B.C.; one spread over Europe, making Greece and Rome, the fourth sub-race, and another shaped the fifth sub-race, the Germans and the English. He took down into India the dwellers in the Gobi sea settlement—the Mother of the fifth root-race—by several migrations between 18,875 B.C. and 9,700 B.C., and they conquered India, settled down and reared a fine civilisation. The Hindus look

upon the Manu as their Law-giver, and still call themselves the "Sons of Manu" owing to the peculiarity about the work of Manu that the whole of the root-race takes origin in Him and that He is literally the Father of His Race. He is now building a new sub-race, the sixth, the Austral-American, chiefly over in America and also in Australia and New Zealand. Out of that fine type, the future Manu, the Master Moryā who is at present the Lieutenant of Vaivasvata Manu, will choose the materials for His sixth root-race, and later on will settle them in a Colony in Lower California and shape them into the new type given to Him by the King.

The Lord Vaivasvata Manu is the tallest of all the Adepts, being six feet eight inches in height, and perfectly proportioned. He is the Representative Man of our fifth root-race, its prototype, and every member of that race is directly descended from Him. The Manu has a very striking face of great power, with an aquiline nose, a full and flowing brown beard, and brown eyes. "Our Manu is living in the Himalayas, not far from the house of the Lord Maitreya, and He comes sometimes to His great Brother's house. He is a magnificent-looking man, with a great beard rolling down over His chest in glowing waves of brown shot with gold, and masses of glorious hair, wave-like, a lion-head of unsurpassable force and power. Tall is He, and of king-like majesty, with keen eyes piercing as an eagle's, tawny and brilliant with golden lights."

10. The "Nilgiri Master" or Rishi Agastya.—What the Lord Vaivasvata Manu does for the whole Aryan root-race and the lands it occupies, this Mahā-Rishi, "Seventh of the Seven"—of the seven sages or Saptarishi—also on the First Ray, does for India, the Mother-Country

of the Aryans, and the treasure-house of their Ancient Wisdom.

His historical achievements are mostly concerned with the Aryanising of the South of India, by leading down and establishing colonies of Brāhmanas from the North, many centuries B.C., after the migrations of the first Aryans from Central Asia to India between 18,875 B.C. and 9,700 B.C. as stated before. These Brāhmanas lived under the protection of the Dravidian Kings, the Rishi Agastya Himself being named the Royal Priest of the Pandyas. In this capacity He compiled the first Tamil Grammar, giving literary form to the rude Dravidian dialect and much enlarging its scope. He founded and presided over the first Tamil Academy, at Madura, probably named after the Northern Mathura. This Madura was destroyed by a flood, but a second Academy grew up and flourished, also under His presidency, though several centuries later, not far from modern Madura. Thus acting directly through a continuous physical incarnation or influencing the course of events more subtly through His disciples, it was Rishi Agastya who shaped Tamil Culture.

The name of the Pandya King, who was advised by the Rishi Agastya, means "He who survived the flood"; and several legends show that the Rishi was actively concerned in the shaping of India after the great cataclysm which sank the greater part of Lankā, leaving only Ceylon, while raising the Himālayas and the northern plains.

This Great One to whom the name Jupiter was assigned in the book *Man: Whence, How and Whither*, is deeply absorbed in the abstruser sciences of which Chemistry and Astronomy are the outer shells, and lives near Tiruvallum, about eighty miles from Adyar, Madras, where He may be approached by the few who know—and

was so visited by Bishop C. W. Leadbeater and Swami T. Subba Row in His Nilgiri retreat—though the idly curious find themselves somehow thwarted in all attempts to intrude on His privacy. He diverges slightly from what may, with all reverence, be called the usual type of the physical body of the Adept. Says Bishop Leadbeater: "He is shorter than most members of the Brotherhood and is the only One of Them, so far as I am aware, whose hair shows streaks of grey. He holds Himself very upright and moves with alertness and military precision. He is a landed proprietor, and during the visit which I paid to Him with Swami T. Subba Row, I saw Him several times transacting business with men who appeared to be foremen, bringing reports to Him and receiving instructions."

II. The Master M. (Moryā).—It was the Master Moryā, the Lieutenant and destined Successor of the Lord Vaivasvata Manu, and the future Manu of the sixth root-race, who with Master Kuthumi founded the Theosophical Society through H. P. Blavatsky and H. S. Olcott, both disciples of Master M. He has almost always been a ruler in past lives, and now wears an Indian body and lives in Tibet near Shigatse, at a little distance from the house of His Brother, the Master Kuthumi. He is a Rajput King by birth, and has a dark beard divided into two parts, dark, almost black, hair falling to His shoulders, and dark and piercing eyes, full of power. He is six feet six inches in height, and bears Himself like a soldier, speaking in short terse sentences as if He were accustomed to being instantly obeyed. He is generally dressed in white and wears a turban. He appears to be a man absolutely in the prime of life—possibly thirty-five or forty years of age; yet many of the stories which His pupils tell of Him

assign to Him an age four or five times greater than that, and Madame Blavatsky said that when she first saw Him in her childhood He appeared to her exactly the same as at the present time. She also often described how she met Him in Hyde Park, London, in the year 1851, when He came over with a number of other Indian Princes to attend the first great International Exhibition.

In the presence of the Master Moryā, who is a Representative of the First Ray at the level of Chohan Initiation, there is a sense of overwhelming power and strength, and He has an imperious dignity that compels the deepest reverence.

12. The Master K. H. (Kuthumi)—Very often a priest or teacher in past lives, He was the Egyptian priest Sarthon; Chief Priest of a Temple at Agade in Asia Minor, about 1,530 B.C.; the great philosopher Pythagoras, about 600 B.C.; the flamen (Priest) of the Temple of Jupiter in Rome during the reign of Tiberius; also Nāgārjuna, the Buddhist teacher, about A.D. 170.

The Master Kuthumi wears the body of a Kashmiri Brāhmana, and "is as fair in complexion as the average Englishman. He, too, has flowing hair, and His eyes are blue and full of joy and love. His hair and beard are brown, which, as the sunlight catches them, become ruddy with glints of gold. His face is somewhat hard to describe, for His expression is ever changing as He smiles; the nose is finely chiselled, and the eyes are large and of a wonderful liquid blue". He generally wears white clothes, but is not seen wearing a head-dress of any kind, except on the rare occasions when He assumes the yellow robe of the Gelugpa sect or clan, which includes a hood somewhat of the shape of the Roman helmet. He has the appearance of being about the same age as His constant friend

and companion, the Master Moryā ; yet it has been said that He took a University Degree in Europe just before the middle of last century, which would certainly make Him something very like a centenarian.

The Master is a great linguist, and besides being a fine English scholar has a thorough knowledge of French and German. He has composed some music, and has written notes and papers for various purposes. He is also much interested in the growth of physical science, although this is especially the province of one of the other great Masters of the Wisdom.

The Masters Moryā and Kuthumi occupy houses on opposite sides of a narrow ravine, near Shigatse in Tibet, the slopes of which are covered with pine trees, and at the bottom flows a small stream. Paths run down the ravine past Their houses, and meet at the bottom, where there is a little bridge. Close to the bridge a narrow opening leads to a system of vast subterranean halls containing an occult museum, the contents of which appear to be intended as a kind of illustration of the whole process of evolution and of which the Master Kuthumi is the Guardian on behalf of the Great White Brotherhood.

In the vestibule leading to these vast halls are kept the living images, to be explained presently, of those pupils of the Masters Moryā and Kuthumi who happen at the time to be on Probation. These images are ranged round the walls like statues, and are perfect representations of the pupils concerned. It is not probable, however, that they are visible to physical eyes, for the lowest matter entering into their composition is etheric.

A rough and uneven track leads down the valley by the side of the stream. From either of the two houses of the Masters the other house can be seen. These houses,

which are of stone, very heavily and strongly built, are both above the bridge, but it is doubtful whether both could be seen from it, since the ravine bends round. If the path be followed up the valley, which faces south, past the house of the Master Kuthumi it leads to a large pillar of rock, beyond which, the ravine bending round, it passes out of sight. Some distance further on, the ravine opens out into a plateau on which there is a lake.

The Master has a large garden of His own. He possesses, too, a quantity of land, and employs labourers to cultivate it. Near the house there are flowering shrubs and masses of flowers growing freely, with ferns among them. Through the garden there flows a streamlet, which forms a little waterfall, and over it a tiny bridge is built. "Here He often sits when He is sending out streams of thought and benediction upon His people; it would no doubt appear to the casual observer as though He were sitting idly watching Nature, and listening heedlessly to the song of the birds, and to the splash and tumble of the water. Sometimes, too, He sits in His great armchair, and when His people see Him thus, they know that He must not be disturbed; they do not know exactly what He is doing, but suppose Him to be in *samādhi*. The fact that people in the East understand this kind of meditation and respect it may be one of the reasons why the Adepts prefer to live there rather than in the West."

Every morning a number of people—not exactly pupils, but followers—come to the Master's house, and sit on the verandah and outside it. Sometimes He gives them a little talk—a sort of lecturette; but more often He goes on with His work and takes no notice of them beyond a friendly smile, with which they seem equally contented. They evidently come to sit in His aura and venerate Him.

Of the Master's family but little is known. There is a lady, evidently a pupil, whom He calls 'sister'. Whether she is actually His sister or not is not known; she might possibly be a cousin or a niece. She looks much older than He, but that would not make the relationship improbable, as He has appeared of about the same age for a long time. Her principal work seems to be to look after the housekeeping and manage the servants. Among the latter are an old man and his wife, who have been for a long time in the Master's service. They do not know anything of the real dignity of their employer, but regard Him as a very indulgent and gracious patron, and naturally they benefit greatly by being in His service.

From time to time the Master Kuthumi rides on a big bay horse, and occasionally, when Their work lies together, He is accompanied by the Master Moryā, who always rides a magnificent white horse. The former regularly visits some of the monasteries, and sometimes goes up a great pass to a lonely monastery in the hills. Riding in the course of His duties seems to be His principal exercise, but He sometimes walks with the Master Djwāl Kul, who lives quite near to the great crag which gives a view of the lake.

The union of pupil with Master is closer than any tie imaginable on earth; closer still, because at a higher level, was that between the Master Kuthumi and His Teacher, the Master Dhruva, who was in His turn a pupil of the Lord Maitreya, during the time when the latter took pupils. Thereby the Master Kuthumi also became one with the Lord Maitreya, and as at Their level unity is still more perfect, the Master Kuthumi is one with the Boḍhi-saṭṭva in a very wonderful way. He is the Assistant and destined Successor of the World-Teacher just as the

Master Moryā is the Assistant and destined Successor of the Lord Vaivasvata Manu. In the person of the Master Kuthumi, as in that of His Chief, the Lord Maitreya, the influence that is especially noticeable is the radiance of His all-embracing Love. The Representative of the Second Ray on the level of Chohān Initiation at present, many centuries hence He will succeed the great Lord in His high Office, and assuming the sceptre of the World-Teacher, become the Bodhisattva of the sixth root-race.

13. The "Venetian" Master.—At the Head of the Third Ray stands the great Master, the Venetian Chohan, so called because by birth He is a Venetian. In the people of that Ray the characteristic of Adaptability appears very strongly, and those who are advanced on this Ray have a great deal of tact and a rare faculty of doing the right thing at the right moment.

Perhaps the Venetian Chohan is the handsomest of all the Members of the Brotherhood. He is very tall—about six feet five inches, and has a flowing beard and golden hair somewhat like those of the Manu; and His eyes are blue. Although He was born in Venice, His family undoubtedly has Gothic blood in its veins, for He is a man distinctly of that type.

14. The Master "Serapis".—The Fourth Ray is under the care of the Master Serapis, and so the special line of this Chohan is Harmony and Beauty. He helped and taught Colonel Olcott in the early days of the Theosophical Society, when his own Master, the Master Moryā, was otherwise engaged for a time.

The Master Serapis is tall, and fair in complexion. He is a Greek by birth, though all His work has been done in Egypt and in connection with the Egyptian Lodge. He

is very distinguished and ascetic in face, somewhat resembling the late Cardinal Newman.

15. The Master Hilarion.—Once Iamblichus of the Neo-Platonic School, the Master Hilarion gave through Mabel Collins *The Light on the Path* and through H. P. Blavatsky *The Voice of the Silence*, and is a “skilled craftsman in poetic English prose and in melodious utterance”. As the Head of the Fifth Ray, this Chohān influences most of the great scientists of the world by His splendid quality of scientific accuracy. Of course, His science extends beyond what is commonly called by that name, and He works with many of the forces which Nature introduces into the life of man.

Though living in Egypt, the Master Hilarion is a Greek and, except that He has a slightly aquiline nose, is of the ancient Greek type. His forehead is low and broad, and resembles that of the Hermes of Praxiteles. He, too, is wonderfully handsome, and looks rather younger than most of the Adepts.

16. The Master Jesus.—He was a disciple two thousand years ago, when at the age of thirty, after His Baptism, the Spirit of God descended upon Him, and He surrendered His pure body to the Christ. He was born again as Apollonius of Tyana, sometimes called the Pagan Christ, in the year one of the Christian era, and attained Adeptship in that incarnation. Taking up the Work, He then travelled far and wide as a Messenger of the Great White Lodge, and made in various places in Europe centres of occult force to be used long afterwards when again the Great Teacher should appear. Those secret centres, existing as they do in Europe, and having physical objects (talismans) buried thereat, linked to Jesus in His causal body with their influence consequently lasting through the

ages, are the various points of future importance, whence the Light shall spread, and whence the Teaching shall go forth. He again appeared in Southern India as the teacher Rāmānujāchārya to revive the devotional element in Hinduism in the eleventh century A.D.

The Chohān Jesus rules the Sixth Ray, that of Bhakti or Devotion. This is the Ray of the devotional saints and mystics of every religion, and this Master has charge of such people under whatever form they may worship the Divine Being. He is the Master of devotees, and the key-note of His Presence is an intense purity, and a fiery type of devotion that brooks no obstacles. He has the Christian religion as His special charge, and the spiritual forces liberated during Christian ceremonials come directly through Him. He now wears a Syrian body, has the dark skin, dark eyes and black beard of the Arab, and generally wears white robes and a turban. He lives amongst the Druses of Mount Lebanon, and is just now flooding His Church with the Mystic Christianity so noticeable in these days.

17. The Master Rakoczi.—This last survivor of the Royal House of Rakoczi, known in France as Comte de S. Germain in the history of the eighteenth century, was born in that century in Hungary and is, we are told, known to some in that same body.

In his first life of historical importance he belonged to a noble Roman family and was known as St. Alban, having suffered martyrdom in the great persecution of the Emperor Diocletian early in the fourth century at the town of his birthplace, Verulam in England, now called St. Albans after him. Verulam was at that time the capital of Roman England, though it is now but a small place. Soon after that he had another very important

incarnation in Constantinople in the year A.D. 411 when under the name of Proclus, which in after life he was destined to make famous, he was one of the last exponents of Neo-Platonism and overshadowed the mediæval Christian Church with his influence.

The next thing that is definitely known of him at present is that he was reborn in the year 1211, and in that life as Roger Bacon, a Franciscan friar and a great experimentalist and scientist, he was a reformer both of the theology and science of his day. In 1375 came his birth as Christian Rosenkreutz, a birth of very great importance, for he founded the great secret society of the Rosicrucians, which, though supposed to have died out, is still in existence, while its teaching is found in a somewhat different form in Theosophy and partly in Freemasonry. He again took birth some fifty years later as John Hunyadi, an eminent Hungarian soldier and leader, and again about A.D. 1500 he had a life as the monk Robertus somewhere in middle Europe. After that comes one of the very greatest of his births when in the year 1561 he was born as Francis Bacon. In fact, as known largely by means of a cipher story written by him secretly in the works which he published, he was the first son of no less a personage than Queen Elizabeth, who had married Sir Robert Dudley, afterwards the Earl of Leicester, when they were both prisoners in the Tower. That marriage having been legalised at a later time, he should have been King of England instead of James I, but owing to various reasons he had bound himself by a pledge to his mother not to let the fact be known. He set to work to constitute the English language as we know it to-day, and that he did largely by writing those plays attributed to Shakespeare (Shakespeare is proved to have been an illiterate man who

could not spell his name in the same way two or three times consecutively), and also, perhaps chiefly, by editing the authorised version of the Bible, which was then being translated by a committee of forty-eight under the direction of King James I.

A century later he is said to have taken birth as Ivan Rakoczi, a prince of Transylvania. He was the Comte de St. Germain at the time of the French Revolution. He was also Baron Hompesch, or he may have disguised himself as Baron Hompesch, for they belong almost to the same period. Hompesch was the last of the knights of St. John of Malta, who arranged to transfer the Island of Malta to the English.

A disciple through many laborious lives, but now a Master, this "Hungarian Adept" of *The Occult World* still lives in a body which has no appearance of great age and it is known that He still uses the name 'Rakoczi' sometimes. But beyond that considerable mystery surrounds His movements. He moves about Europe incognito and turns up at intervals, but what He does in the interim is not known. He is in charge of a great deal of work in Europe, and is also the Head of the Seventh or Ceremonial Ray, the influence of which, superseding that of Devotion—the Sixth Ray—is now gradually spreading all over the world. Naturally he is deeply interested both in the work of the Christian Church and in Freemasonry (and Comasonry)—cults which are in reality two expressions of the same eternal truth, though they are popularly supposed to be diametrically opposed—and is also much concerned with the political situation in Europe, and the growth of modern physical science. He works to a large extent through ceremonial magic, and employs the services of

great Angels who obey Him implicitly and lovingly. Though He speaks all European and many Oriental languages, much of His working is in Latin, the language which is the special vehicle of His thought. He has a suit of golden chain-mail, which once belonged to a Roman Emperor, and in His various rituals He wears wonderful and many-coloured robes and jewels.

The Master the Comte de St. Germain resembles the Mahāchohān in many ways. Though He is not especially tall, He is very upright and military in His bearing, and He has the exquisite courtesy and dignity of a grand seigneur of the eighteenth century. His eyes are large and brown, and are filled with tenderness and humour, though there is in them a glint of power; and the splendour of His Presence impels men to make obeisance. His face is olive-tanned; His close-cut brown hair is parted in the centre and brushed back from the forehead, and He has a short and pointed beard. Often He wears a dark uniform with facings of gold lace—often also a magnificent red military cloak—and these accentuate His soldier-like appearance. He travels much though He usually resides in an ancient castle in Hungary that has belonged to His family for many centuries. He was met physically in Rome in A.D. 1901 by Bishop Leadbeater who had a long conversation with Him.

18. The Master D. K. (Djwāl Kul).—He was formerly the philosopher Kleinias, a disciple of Pythagoras in Greece, and was later the Buddhist teacher Āryasangā, about A.D. 600.

The body of this Master, like that of the Nilgiri Master, diverges slightly from what may be called the usual type of the physical body of the Adept. He is still wearing the same body in which He attained Adeptship

only a few years ago, and perhaps for that reason it has not been possible to make that body a perfect reproduction of the Augoeides. His face is distinctly Tibetan in character, with high cheek bones, and is somewhat rugged in appearance, showing signs of age. In order that He might have an abiding-place quite near to the Master Kuthumi—His own Master—He constructed for Himself with His own hands, in the days of His pupilage, a small hut or cabin, further up the hill, near to the great crag, mentioned before, at a little distance from the house and grounds of His Master, on the left bank of the stream running between the houses of the Masters Morya and Kuthumi.

19, 20.—Those who in Their last earth-lives were known as Sir Thomas More and Thomas Vaughan are also now Masters.

These are some of the Great Ones publicly known, living in different countries scattered over the world. Beyond the necessity of birth, when one body is worn out They (with the exception of the Four Kumāras) choose another wherein it may be most convenient to work, not attaching any importance to the nationality of the body, though the body will be usually splendidly handsome and always perfectly healthy, while again a new body taken in a subsequent incarnation will be almost an exact reproduction of the old one. Moreover, owing to perfect health and absence of worry, They are able to preserve Their physical bodies much longer than we can. Our bodies grow old and die for various reasons, from inherited weakness, disease, accident and self-indulgence, worry and overwork. But in the case of an Adept none of these causes is present, though we must of course remember that His body is fit for work and capable of endurance

immeasurably beyond those of ordinary men. Almost all the Masters of whom we know appear as men in the prime of life, yet in many cases there is testimony, as stated before, to prove that Their physical bodies must have long passed the ordinary age of man.

Sometimes an Adept for some special purpose wants a body to use temporarily amid the bustle of the world. That will be the case when the World-Teacher comes, and we have been told that several other Adepts also may then appear, to act as His Lieutenants and assist Him in His great work for humanity. Most of the Great Ones will follow the example of Their Chief, and borrow temporarily the bodies of Their pupils, so it is necessary that a certain number of such vehicles should be ready for Their use.

Q. But, since the Adepts have physical bodies of Their own, why will They need others on the occasion of the coming of the World-Teacher?

Ans. Those who, attaining the level of Adeptship, choose as Their future career to remain upon this world and help directly in the evolution of Their own humanity, find it convenient for Their work to retain physical bodies. In order to be suitable for Their purposes, these bodies must be of no ordinary kind. Not only must they be absolutely sound in health, but they must also be perfect expressions of as much of the ego as can be manifested on the physical plane.

The building up of such a body as this is no light task. When the ego of an ordinary man comes down to his new baby body, he finds it in charge of an artificial elemental, which has been created according to his karma. This elemental is industriously occupied in modelling the form which is soon to be born in the outer world, and it

remains after birth and continues that moulding process usually until the body is six or seven years old. During this period the ego is gradually acquiring closer contact with his new vehicles, emotional and mental as well as physical, and is becoming accustomed to them; but the actual work done by himself upon these new vehicles up to the point at which the elemental withdraws is, in most cases, inconsiderable. He is certainly in connection with the body, but generally pays but little attention to it, preferring to wait until it has reached a stage where it is more responsive to his efforts.

The case of an Adept is very different from this. As there is no evil karma to be worked out, no artificial elemental is at work, and the ego himself is in sole charge of the development of the body from the beginning, finding himself limited only by its heredity. This enables a far more refined and delicate instrument to be produced, but it also involves more trouble for the ego, and engages for some years a considerable amount of his time and energy. In consequence of this, and no doubt for other reasons as well, an Adept does not wish to repeat the process more often than is strictly necessary, and He therefore makes His physical body last as long as possible.

A body thus made suitable for higher work is inevitably a sensitive one, and for that very reason it requires careful treatment if it is to be always at its best. It would wear out as ours do if it were subjected to the innumerable petty frictions of the outer world, and its constant torrent of unsympathetic vibrations. Therefore the Great Ones usually live in comparative seclusion, and appear but rarely in that cyclonic chaos which we call daily life. If They were to bring Their bodies into the whirl of curiosity and vehement emotion which is likely to

surround the World-Teacher when He comes, there can be no doubt that the life of these bodies would be greatly shortened, and also, because of their extreme sensitiveness, there would be much unnecessary suffering.

By temporarily occupying the body of a pupil, the Adept avoids these inconveniences, and at the same time gives an incalculable impetus to the pupil's evolution. He inhabits the vehicle only when He needs it—to deliver a lecture, perhaps, or to pour a special flood of blessing; and as soon as He has done what He wishes, He steps out of the body, and the pupil, who has all the while been in attendance, resumes it, as the Adept goes back to His own proper vehicle to continue His usual work for the helping of the world. In this way His regular business is but little affected, yet He has always at His disposal a body through which He can co-operate, when required, on the physical plane, in the beatific mission of the World-Teacher.

This plan of borrowing a suitable body is always adopted by the Great Ones when They think it well to descend among men, under conditions such as those which now obtain in the world. The Lord Gautama employed it when He came as the original Zoroaster, 29,700 B.C., taking the body of the second son (our present Master K. H.) of the then king of Persia (our present Master M.), and also when He came, twenty-five centuries ago, to attain Buddhahood, and the Lord Maitreya took the same course when He visited Palestine two thousand years ago. The only exception is that when a new Bodhisattva assumes the Office of World-Teacher after His predecessor has become the Buddha, on His first appearance in the world in that capacity He takes birth as a little child in the ordinary way, as was done by the

present Bodhisattva, when He took birth as Shri Krishna on the glowing plains of India, as stated before.

The number of Adepts who retain physical bodies to help the evolution of the world is small, about fifty or sixty, but the great majority even among These do not take pupils, as They are engaged in quite other work.

Q. What is the work of the Masters?

Ans. In countless ways They help the progress of humanity. From the highest sphere Their light pours down in general benediction like the light of the sun, illuminating and blessing all. A man may open the windows of his room and let the sunshine flood the room. Similarly, anyone may open the windows of his soul to let his spirit be flooded with Their light and strength in proportion to his receptivity.

Then there are general organisations, religious communities, into which a special Master will pour down His blessings, strength and spiritual energy. Great religions are like mighty reservoirs or great vessels of different shapes and forms, all containing the one spiritual water for the quenching of the spiritual thirst of man.

Next comes the great intellectual work on the higher mental plane where the Masters help the world of thought by raining down noble ideals, inspiring thoughts, devotional aspirations and streams of intellectual help on all men, whereby a discovery flashes into the mind of a patient searcher after truth, or the answer to a long-studied problem illumines the intellect of a lofty philosopher. Thus great thoughts of beauty will enter the mind of a genius in art, or thoughts of patriotism be received by a political genius. On the same higher mental plane They impress more liberal ideas upon great preachers and teachers, and send Their wishes to Their

disciples about the work they should do. On the lower mental plane They teach those who are in the heavenly world and generate thought-forms to influence the concrete mind and guide it along useful lines of physical activity.

In the astral world They have the helping of the dead, general supervision of the teaching of pupils and the sending of aid in numerous cases of need, while in the physical world They watch the tendency of events and neutralise, as far as the Law permits, the undesirable currents, strengthening the good and weakening the evil.

They work also with the Angels of Nations and guide the spiritual forces as the latter guide the material ones, choosing or rejecting actors in the mighty Work, influencing kings, statesmen and councils of men. Again, They stand as a Guardian Wall around humanity, within which it can evolve without being crushed by the tremendous cosmic forces which play around our planet. From time to time one of Them comes forth into the world of men as a great religious teacher or prophet to spread a new form of the Eternal Verities, suited to the need and capacity of the people of the time or to the civilisation of a new race.

Though the number of Adepts is small, They have arranged that in all the world no life shall be disregarded or neglected ; so They have divided the earth into special areas in somewhat the same way as in older countries the Christian Church has divided the whole land into parishes. The parishes of the Adepts, however, are not country districts or parts of towns, but huge countries and even continents. As the world is at present divided, one great Adept may be said to be in charge of Europe,

and another looks after India ; and thus the whole world is parcelled out. The parishes do not follow our political or geographical boundaries, but within His territory the Adept has all the different grades and forms of evolution to regard—not only the human kingdom, but also the kingdoms of the Angels, the various classes of nature-spirits, and the animals, vegetables and minerals beneath us, as well as the kingdoms of the elemental essence and many others of which so far nothing has been heard by mankind ; so there is a vast amount of work to be accomplished.

A large part of the Adepts' work lies at levels far beyond the physical, as They are engaged in pouring out Their own power, and also the force from the great store filled by the Nirmānakāya. The Great Ones also take advantage of the ceremonies of all religions to pour out Their power over the world on the lower planes, and thus to stimulate in as many men as possible the spiritual growth of which each is capable. But it is not only in connection with religious ceremonial that this is done, for the Brotherhood makes use of every opportunity that offers. If there be a gathering of people or pilgrims who are all under the influence of devotion, all bent for the time being upon nobler and higher thought, such a gathering offers to the Adepts an unusual opportunity, since it forms a focus which They can employ as a channel for spiritual influence.

But the activities on the lower planes are mainly entrusted to Their disciples. They Themselves deal rather with the egos in their causal bodies and devote Themselves to pouring spiritual influence upon them, thereby evoking from them all that is noblest and most beneficial for their growth.

Normally, although incarnate, the Members of the Occult Hierarchy remain in retired and secluded spots in order that They may carry on the helpful work which would be impossible of accomplishment in the crowded haunts of men and the tumult of human life. But at certain times in human history, in serious crises, Masters and even loftier Beings, come out into the world of men.

Q. Then why does an Adept, whose work seems to lie almost entirely on higher planes, need a physical body at all?

Ans. It is really no concern of ours, but if speculation on such a matter be not irreverent, various reasons suggest themselves. The Adept spends much of His time in projecting streams of influence, and while, so far as has been observed, these are most often on the higher mental level, or on the plane above that, it is probable that they may sometimes at least be etheric currents, and for the manipulation of these the possession of a physical body is undoubtedly an advantage. Again, most of the Masters have a few pupils or assistants who live with or near Them on the physical plane, and a physical body may be necessary for their sake. Of this we may be certain, that if an Adept chooses to take the trouble to maintain such a body, He has a good reason for it; for enough of Their methods of working is known for us to be assured that They always do everything in the best way, and by the means which involve the least expenditure of energy.

Q. But with so much power and wisdom why don't the Masters take more pupils? Why do They withhold knowledge? Why do They not remove crime and misery from the world?

Ans. They are waiting and waiting with tireless patience to find some human heart opening itself out,

someone willing to be taught. But people's hearts are fast closed against Them with the lock of gold, of power, of fame, of sloth and indifference, of sin and worldly enjoyment; and unless they are unlocked, the Teacher waiting outside cannot cross the threshold and illuminate the mind. "Without Him," says a newly-chosen pupil, "I could have done nothing, but through His help I have been able to succeed." Only it should be remembered that help is ready and waiting for every one; therefore whenever there is any delay, it is on the side of the pupil that the difficulty lies, never on His. Much as a man may desire to find his Teacher, the Teacher is a thousandfold more constant in His desire to find him, because many are wanted, while only a few are found, who, being trained, may go out into the world to help suffering humanity.

Thus the Teachers do not withhold knowledge because They grudge the giving, but They are hampered by the want of receptivity, by the closing of the heart. They cannot force humanity along any line of progress, though They help when the slightest opportunity is offered. If They bent our wills to Theirs, civilisation would be more perfect than now, but we should be only like obedient children instead of developing strength and initiative of self-reliant manhood.

Again, no cure of misery can be permanent so long as the cause of the mischief is kept going. The miseries growing out of men's selfishness can be removed permanently only by striking at the root of causes. The root of all evil is ignorance, as already stated at the end of Chapter I, and the Masters are always ready to teach if only They find persons willing to be taught. "For when the disciple is ready, the Master is ready also."

"Therefore in the hall of learning, when he is capable of entering there, the disciple will always find his Master."

Q. If the Masters have such great spiritual powers, why do They permit the conquest and humiliation of Their countries like Egypt and India?

Ans. It has already been said that Masters are of many races, and that They seek to aid the progress of men of all races spiritually rather than materially. Moreover, They are Themselves obedient to the Law, and cannot interfere with the karma of nations. They help those who are willing, by suggestion, warning or encouragement, but cannot take into Their hands the destiny of persons or nations. Again, the races have to develop, not into puppets pulled by strings in Masters' hands, but into self-reliant entities by lessons of experience according to kârmic laws and by a freedom of choice which is a dawning manifestation of the God within.

Q. If an ordinary man met a Master on the physical plane, would he recognise Him as such?

Ans. Very probably not. He would certainly know that he was in the presence of one who was impressive, noble and dignified with a serenity and benevolence expressing the peace within, but there would be no external peculiarity by which he could divine the fact that the man was an Adept. A Master would be more silent than most, for He does not waste His force in idle conversation, and speaks only with the definite purpose of encouraging and helping or warning. He would be seen to be wise and kindly, and to have a keen sense of humour. But to know Him as an Adept, it would be necessary to see His causal body with its greatly increased size—His enormous aura which in many cases extends a mile or more on all sides of Him—its all-round development and its

special arrangement of colours. It is a law in nature that we can only recognise that to which we can respond, only recognise in proportion as we reproduce, and as Mæsterlinck puts it: "it is only by revealing the divine that is in us, that we may discover the divine in others". So an ordinary man who has not yet unfolded divinity in himself, though certainly impressed by the physical presence of the Master, will not recognise His occult powers.

Q. How is a man brought to the portals of the Path, to the beginning of the path of spiritual development?

Ans. According to the eastern books there are four such means:

1. *Sat-sang*—companionship of those who have already entered upon the Path. The influence exerted by one who is already on the Path is not in any sort limited by the teaching which he gives. It is the influence of the life, the influence of the vibrations radiating from him, that is so powerful. The principal thing is that the disciple shall be with the teacher. In India, if the teacher be a peripatetic philosopher—as so many of them are—if he wanders from place to place, his band of followers or disciples goes about with him, just as the disciples of Jesus travelled with Him through Palestine. And that is entirely scientific. The aura of the teacher—his higher vehicles generally—is keyed up to a somewhat higher rate of vibration than the auras of his pupils. Therefore his mere proximity acts upon their vehicles and helps them to vibrate at a rate similar to his own. Thus by living always in the aura of a less worldly man the pupils themselves become less worldly than they otherwise could. The higher vibration being quite constant in its pressure, the disciples, whether awake or

asleep, are in close contact with it and are absorbing it with a consequent change in their character. In ordinary physics we know that the stronger vibration will dominate the weaker, and the same is the case on the higher planes. So it has always been recognised that the actual presence of the teacher counts for enormously more than the words he can say, and helps the pupil rapidly to change his character—a slow and tedious business ordinarily, yet a thing quite necessary for one who wishes to enter the Path.

2. *Shravana*—hearing or reading of definite teaching on occult philosophy. It may happen that a man may hear or read a teaching of this kind which will commend itself to his intuition, and then he will naturally seek to satisfy his desire to find out more about it. This is a result of previous karma, of karma in a previous life. He has already come in contact with the truth and convinced himself of its beauty and reality in another life, and so when it comes before him in this life, he knows it is true. There may be hundreds and thousands who may hear and read the same teaching and yet may not receive any impulse from it. It simply means that these latter are at a stage when it is all foreign to them and therefore does not awaken in them the response that it awakens in those who have the good karma of having understood it before and are therefore able to see in it that which they have brought with them the power to see.

3. *Manana*—enlightened reflection. By sheer force of hard thinking and close reasoning a man may arrive at the truth and solve the riddle of life. He may come to see that there must be a Plan of Evolution, that there must be Those who know all about it, the evolved and perfected Men, and that there must be a Path by which They may be reached. And the man who comes to

that decision of course sets out to look for the Path and find his way to the Great Ones. Those who travel by this Path are probably few, but the thing is a possibility.

4. *Nididhyāsana*—practice of virtue through “meditation”. It should be remembered that though the practice of virtue leads to the commencement of the Path, it is by no means the end of it, as the average Christian is apt to believe. In the early days of Christianity, Purification—or Saintship which they now set before themselves as their goal—was only the first step. The early Christian teachers certainly held that it was a man's duty to become a saint; but at the same time they held that it was the first stage only; and S. Clement of Alexandria, who was in many respects the greatest of the early Fathers of the Church, speaks rather slightly of that stage. “Purity, why, it is only a negative state and is valuable chiefly as a condition of insight.” The chief use of being pure is that unless a man is pure he cannot see clearly. The thing itself is merely negative. Being good is in itself only a condition, necessary for further progress. A man must become a saint, but after he has become a saint, he has to begin to attain the second stage of Illumination. This was what S. Peter meant when he said to his pupils: “Add to your faith, knowledge.” Only those who had fully gained that illumination with arduous labour were allowed to pass into the third stage of Initiation. S. Paul said: “We speak wisdom among those that are perfect,” and the word ‘perfect’ here implies a certain level of occult progress. In every Occult School there are things which can only be spoken to those of the higher degrees, others which can only be spoken to those who are pupils of the Master. So in early Christianity there

were those three terms used, Purification, Illumination and Perfection.

Now the statement that the practice of virtue leads a man to the beginning of the Path seems like going back to the old theory : " Be good and you will be happy." But in reality it means that though the man who leads a good life through many incarnations may not thereby develop intellect, he will presently acquire sufficient intuition to carry him into the presence of the people who do know, to bring him in fact to the feet of someone who is a servant of the Master. But this method takes thousands of years and many lives. The man who practises virtue and does not do anything else will reach the portals of the Path eventually, but it is a slow process. He can hasten his progress and save himself much time by following S. Peter's advice and acquiring knowledge ; for then his progress will be much swifter.

When by any of these methods a man reaches a certain level, he inevitably attracts the attention of the Masters and comes into contact with Them, usually through one or other of Their advanced pupils.

Q. How, then, does the Theosophical Society help an aspirant in his approach to the Path ?

Ans. It happens that, in lands which have only the European culture, almost the only way in which a man can get the inner teaching put clearly before him is by coming into the Theosophical Society, or by reading Theosophical works. There have been mystical or spiritualistic works which have given some information, which have gone a long way, but there are none which state the case so clearly, so scientifically, as the Theosophical literature has done.

Human progress is slow, but it is constant ; therefore the number of the Perfected Men is increasing, and

the possibility of attaining to Their level is within the reach of all who are willing to make the stupendous effort required. In normal times aspirants should need many births before they could gain Adeptship, but just now it is possible for them to hasten their progress on that Path, to compress into a few lives the evolution which otherwise would take many thousands of years. That is the effort which is being made by many members of the Theosophical Society; for there is in that Society an Inner School which teaches men how to prepare themselves more rapidly for this higher work. That preparation needs great self-control, determined effort carried on year after year, and often with but little to show outwardly in the way of definite progress; for it involves the training of the higher bodies far more than the physical body, and the training of the higher does not always manifest itself very obviously on the physical plane.

It is said that whenever a person joins the outer Theosophical Society the Master looks at him, and furthermore that in many cases the Great Ones guide people to join the Society because of their previous lives. So it would seem that They usually know a great deal about us before we know anything about Them. The Adept never forgets anything. He appears to be always in full possession of all that has happened to Him, and so if He does cast even a most casual glance at a person He will never thereafter overlook that person. When a person joins the Inner School a definite link is formed, not yet *directly* with an Adept, but first of all with the Outer Head of the School, and through the Outer Head with the Master Morya who is the Inner Head.

All those in the Inner School are thus in touch with the Master Morya, though they are often working on

other lines than His, and will become pupils of other Masters when they are taken on Probation. Under such circumstances, however, they will receive the influence of their own future Master through these channels, because the Adepts, although living far apart physically, are in such very close contact that to be in touch with one of Them is really to be linked with all.

This Path has many steps grouped into three great divisions :

(1) The probationary period, or the Probationary Path, before any pledges are taken, or Initiations given to the pupil.

(2) The period of pledged discipleship, or the Path Proper, at the end of which the pupil attains Adeptship.

(3) The official period in which the Adept takes a definite part in the government of the world. The subject of this official period is far above ordinary comprehension.

Q. But how can a householder, a man in the world surrounded with social duties, family obligations and worldly activities, lead the spiritual life and thereby prepare himself for the Path? What are his initial stages of purification?

Ans. Ordinary men have first to be trained in Karma Yoga—action whereby union with the Divine may result. The three gunas or properties of matter, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, make the manifested universe, and the ordinary man, identifying himself with these activities, runs wild under their influence. Karma Yoga consists in the training of these gunas. The use of Tamas or darkness—sluggishness, negligence, indifference, laziness, inertia—in the growth of man is that it acts as a force to be struggled against and overcome, so that strength may be evolved, power of will developed and self-control acquired. So rites and

ceremonies of religion are ordered to train man to overcome sloth and laziness, heedlessness and obstinacy of the lower nature. They are imposed as duties on him to train him to higher life and to compel the lower nature to walk along the right path determined by the will.

Then Rajas or mobility, leading to hurry, bustle and constant effort to accomplish material results and gratify the lower nature, has to be directed, purified and transmuted by Karma Yoga into Sattva—rhythm or harmony—to serve the purpose of the Higher Self, and the life of the householder is the best preparation for the spiritual life.

A householder must perforce live for others, and unselfishness is the chief harvest that he may reap in the rich field of home. Pity or compassion for weaker things is a virtue that he has full opportunity to cultivate there, while endurance and patience are the twins that take their birth most easily in the family-life. Again, liberality, hospitality, free and courteous, charity to the poor and to animals, the acquirement of the power of steady rule and of training younger souls, aloofness of spirit in which the spirit owns nothing even when the body is rolling in wealth, are some of the other virtues acquired in the householder's life. Such are some of the lessons to be learnt in an earlier series of lives by the householder who has fixed his eyes on the goal and who seeks to use his life for the treading of the Probationary Path. In fact, such life is the best training-ground for the life of the disciple.

Now an ordinary man acts for fruit to gratify his lower nature, for desire of reward, of money, under the sway of rājasic quality, but a man who aspires to a spiritual life must change his ideal from selfishness to service, change his motive in the work he may be doing,

and begin to do that, not because it brings him livelihood—though there is nothing to be ashamed of in its bringing him the wherewithal to live here—not because he wants to gain something, but because it ought to be done. He may teach, heal, argue, trade or enter into commercial relations of all kinds, not for the mere money that it brings or the power that it yields, but in order that the great work of the world may be done and that by his service and help to humanity he may be a co-worker with the Divine in the world. Spirituality is the recognition of God everywhere and in everything, and whether a man is of the world worldly or of the spirit spiritual depends, not upon the environment, the outer circumstances, but upon the inner attitude. It is not a question of *what* one does, but *how* one does it.

Thus Karma Yoga substitutes duty for self-gratification, but there is something greater even than duty, and that is when all action is done as sacrifice, when willing and spontaneous sacrifice takes the place of duty. In the outer daily life the man, formerly working for fruit in the world and for heaven after death, does everything first as duty and then as a free-will sacrifice, a joyful giving of everything. Without Divine sacrifice, Divine self-limitations, there would have been no universe, none of the worlds which fill the realms of space; and as the life of the world is based on sacrifice, all true life is also sacrificial. That which binds is not action, but the desire for the fruit of action; and the only action that does not bind is sacrifice; and so carrying out every function of family and civic life as though he realised himself as an embodied God, with every action done as sacrifice, the householder, the man of the world, becomes the perfect or spiritual man. These are the first steps to the Path of

Discipleship for a man living in the world, leading him onwards towards the finding of the Guru, leading him to higher life till he has lost all attachment, is at heart the unattached, the wanderer, and by renunciation and self-sacrifice is filled with knowledge and devotion.

Q. What, now, is the first step or the most important qualification necessary for approach to the Path? What is the mark whereby we can know whether a man is preparing to enter the Path?

Ans. The first step without which no approach to the Path is possible is the Service of Man. "To live to benefit mankind is the first step," says *The Voice of the Silence*. The life of the man approaching the Path is marked by unselfish service of others, by his willingness to sacrifice all for the good of others, by his readiness to give up all, that worldly men account valuable, in devotion to an ideal or to a cause which he believes to embody the right. That is the mark of the man who is approaching the Path. Such a man, developing himself by means of service to others, realises the truth of the words which the Christ Himself uttered: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren ye have done it unto Me."

There is no distinction between various kinds of service, provided it is unselfish and strenuous. It may be purely intellectual, the work of the author or the writer trying to spread among others the knowledge he has found; or it may be along the line of art, wherein the musician, the sculptor, the painter, puts before himself the ideal of making the world a little more beautiful, a little more full of grace; or it may be along the line of social betterment where a man, moved by sympathy for the poor, pours out his life into the work of helping, or tries to change the old social

environments or customs which retard the progress of mankind ; or again the work may be along political lines with the life of a nation as the object of service, or it may be along the lines of healing. Any useful work may be chosen according to capacity ; commerce, industry, supplying men's necessities, all come within service.

Q. But every one is engaged in one or other of these activities. Where, then, lies the difference ?

Ans. The difference lies in the motive with which the work is undertaken. True, men are writers and authors, politicians, social reformers and doctors ; they take part in industry and commerce ; but moved by what motive ? Ordinary men are moved by motives of personal success, not of service, nor of lifting a little of the heavy karma of the world, of raising the world a little higher though at the same time earning their livelihood therein. Of course working for the fruit of action is necessary at a lower stage, but the ideal of service, helping the weak, teaching the ignorant, uplifting the oppressed, that unselfish service which gives everything and asks for nothing in return, not a choice, but an overpowering impulse, is the first step to the Path.

Q. What, then, is the second step or qualification for approach to the Path ?

Ans. Being possessed by an idea, so that no argument, no personal advantage, can turn him away from it, marks the second step. The fixed idea may be that of a maniac, but that is a false idea. If the idea be a true one, turning to the service of man, such an idea-possessed man, like an enthusiast, a hero, a martyr, is near to the entrance of the Path. When a man believes a thing to be true, it is easier for him to die a martyr like Giordano Bruno than to deny that truth. A man is judged more by his motive for

an action than by the action itself. The laurel-crown of heroism is not for the brows of only the successful and the strong ; he also is heroic who aspires, even though, aspiring, he fails. The efforts to realise a noble and lofty Ideal transforms the life into the Great and the Heroic. So making our action as wise as possible, we should give ourselves wholly to Service, keeping nothing back and helping wherever an opportunity for work is seen, and should devote ourselves entirely to some great ideal and follow it both in peace and in storm.

Q. What, now, does it mean to be a pupil of the Master ? What is expected of him who aspires to become one, and what is the work he has to do ?

Ans. The Masters have definitely dedicated Themselves to the service of humanity. Their force, though very great, is still limited, and so They are very careful to use it to the best advantage. A Master may take a man as a pupil only when He sees that the amount of force used in training him will produce greater result in the end than any other method of expending the same amount. No person, however benevolent, kind and earnest he may be in his desire to help others, can be taken as a pupil if he is still full of minor imperfections, or has some weakness which may prove a serious obstacle in his way. If an individual is to receive special help, he must show special receptivity. A Master has no favourite. He has His private affections just as we have, and assuredly He loves some men more than others ; but He will never allow such feelings as those to influence His attitude in the very slightest degree when the work is in question. He will take much trouble over a man if He sees in him the seeds of future greatness, if He thinks that he will prove a good investment for the amount of time and force spent upon

him. There is no such possibility as the faintest thought of favouritism in His mind. He considers simply and solely the work which has to be done, the work of evolution, and the value of the man in relation to it. Only unselfish service, or altruistic undertaking without thought of self, a loving, selfless, helpful nature, catches the attention of a Master, and He turns towards that possible disciple, putting opportunities in his way to test his strength and to call forth his intuition.

To become a pupil of a Master therefore means that the aspirant too must have the same outlook on life as the Master, must *absolutely* forget himself and have no personal desire at all, must be willing to sacrifice everything, and himself first of all, must order his whole life according to the work he has to do, and must forsake all and follow Him. According to the Christ: "He that loseth his life shall find it," while the Lord Buddha says: "Kill out the thirst for life, if you desire the Way."

The pupil is employed by the Master in many different ways. Some have to do the astral work of helping the living and the recently dead; others assist the Master personally in the work being done; some are sent astrally to deliver lectures to audiences of less advanced souls, or teach others who are free in the astral world temporarily in sleep or permanently after death. The newly dead have to be soothed and comforted, to be delivered, when possible, from the terrible though unreasoning fear which but too often seizes them and retards their progress to higher spheres in addition to causing them unnecessary suffering, and to be explained, as far as possible, the condition in which they find themselves and the course of action which is most desirable for them. They have also to be enabled, to the extent of their

capacity, to comprehend the future that lies before them. Every astral helper has a number of regular cases. Most of the training to a new pupil in astral work is given by some of the older pupils, though the Master Himself may sometimes give him some special instructions.

Pupils are also employed by the Powers of Good as agents for the answering of prayers, and as channels for the pouring forth of Their energy. They are furthermore trained to work by suggestion, *i.e.*, simply to put good thoughts into the minds of those who are ready to receive them and suggest true and beautiful thoughts to authors, poets, artists and musicians. Without these influences humanity would be poor indeed, though for the most part it knows little of the source of its true wealth. The Adepts Themselves cannot turn aside from Their exalted work to do these lower and easier tasks, because if They did, the whole machinery of evolution would suffer.

Thus the pupils do a great variety of work in every branch of civilisation and human culture, all of which is part of the Adepts' work in the world; being also apprentices, as stated before, at their lower level they serve as channels of influence and transmitters of the force of the Masters to the world at large.

Q. But with so much work requiring to be done, why does not the Master use the many aspirants who are so devoted to Him and who earnestly desire to be taken as pupils and trained in order to help the world?

Ans. There may be many reasons why He does not. Sometimes a person will have some prominent fault which is in itself quite a sufficient reason. Not infrequently, it is pride. A person may have so great a conceit of himself, that he is not amenable to teaching, although he thinks that he is. Very often in this civilisation of ours the fault

is irritability. We live to a large extent in a civilisation of torturing noises; and above all things noise jars the nerves and causes irritation. Some slight, unpleasant, temporary feeling, which passes out of mind in ten minutes, perhaps, may yet produce an effect on the astral body lasting for forty-eight hours. The vibrations do not settle down again for a considerable period of time. Thus a good and worthy person will have his nerves all ajangle, so that it would be impossible for him to be drawn into very close and constant touch with the Master. Sometimes the impediment is curiosity—curiosity about the affairs of other people, and especially about their occult standing or development. It would be quite impossible that a Master should draw near to Himself one who had that failing.

Another common hindrance is readiness to be offended. Many a good and earnest aspirant is so easily offended as to be of practically no use in the work, because he cannot get on with other people.

Again, many persons, instead of looking at the good points in the work or character of others, are ever ready to find fault and indulge in destructive criticism. But a Master says: "There is a higher criticism which pounces upon a pearl as eagerly as your criticism flies at a flaw."

Many people have failings of this kind; but they do not like if their fault is pointed out to them, and do not generally believe that they have it.

Self-centredness is only another form of pride, but it is very prominent at the present day. The personality which we have been building up for many thousands of years has grown strong, and often self-assertive, and it is one of the hardest tasks to reverse its attitude and compel it to acquire the habit of looking at things

from the standpoint of others. One must certainly step out of the centre of his own circle, if he wishes to come to the Master.

It sometimes happens, however, that the aspirants have not any particular outstanding defect, but they are not yet big enough, and must grow a little all-round before they will be worthy. It requires some strength and bigness to put oneself in the attitude towards the work which the Master Himself adopts, because, in addition to any defect of our own, we have the whole pressure of the thought of the world against us—the steady pressure of opinion from without—for millions of people all around us are thinking personal thoughts.

The astral and mental bodies of an aspirant ought to be continually exhibiting four or five big and splendid emotions—love, devotion, sympathy and intellectual aspiration among them. But instead of a few great emotions vibrating splendidly and clearly with fine colour, the astral body is generally seen to be spotted over with red and brown and grey and black vortices, often a hundred or more. They are somewhat like a mass of warts would be on a physical body, preventing the skin from being sensitive as it should be. The candidate must see to it that these are removed, and that the usual tangle of petty emotions is entirely combed away.

There can be no half measures on the Path. Many people are in the position of those much-maligned individuals, Ananias and Sapphira. They do not give everything, but keep back a little bit to themselves—not of their money, but of personal feeling deep down, which holds them back from the Master's feet. In occultism that will not do. Aspirants must follow the Master without reserve, not saying within: "I will follow the

Master so long as He does not want me to work with such-and-such a person ; I will follow the Master so long as all that I do is recognised !” They must not make conditions. This does not mean that they should give up their ordinary physical plane duties, but simply that their whole self should be at the Master’s disposal. They must be prepared to yield anything, to go anywhere—not as a test, but because the love of the work is the biggest thing in their lives. They must adopt an altogether different attitude towards life in general ; that has been expressed by one of the Masters in the phrase : “ He that wishes to work with Us and for Us must leave his own world and come into Ours.”

Q. What should we do to attract the attention of the Master ?

Ans. If we work along the same lines as He works we shall come more and more into sympathy with Him, and our thoughts will become more and more like His. This will bring us nearer and nearer to Him both in thought and activity, and in so doing presently we shall attract His attention, for He is all the time watching the world in order to find those who will be of use in His work. Noticing us, He will presently draw us nearer to Him for still closer and more detailed observation. That is usually done by bringing us into contact with one who is already His pupil. It is thus quite unnecessary for anyone to make any direct effort to attract His attention.

Q. But among the myriads of men in the whole of humanity how can a Master know whether any person is fit for the Path ?

Ans. On the background of human selfishness, in the night of human struggle, a heart on fire with the love and

service of humanity glows like a lamp in the dark, like the flame of a light-house in the darkness of the night, and the Master knows at once that a future disciple is there.

As a man standing on a mountain-top sees a light in a single cottage because the light shines out against the surrounding darkness, so a man having lighted his soul, catches the eye of the Watcher on the mountain. But a rigid self-discipline is necessary before a man can become even a candidate for discipleship.

Q. In what way is a man led to seek the Master ?

Ans. Truly has it been declared in an eastern Scripture, the *Bhagavad-Gītā* of the Hindus : “ By whatever road a man approaches Me, even on that road do I welcome him, for all roads are Mine.” And again : “ The ways to God are as many as the breaths of the children of men ” is the exquisite saying of the Sufis, the mystics of Islam. But all these various methods may be classed into three groups : Jñāna Yoga, Union by Knowledge ; Bhakti Yoga, Union by Devotion ; Karma Yoga, Union by Action ; all the three blending into one at a later stage when each acquires the qualifications of the other two. In the first, one is moved by an intense desire for knowledge, by the longing to understand ; in the second a man approaches the seeking by intense love for some person or loyalty and devotion to a leader embodying an ideal ; while in the third great type one has the will-aspect aroused in him by the realisation of the terrible suffering of so many around him. When people have reached a point when they feel they must know or perish, when they feel they must have a perfect ideal or lose all heart to live, or when they feel they must find a remedy for human pain, then something comes in their way to stimulate a conscious search for a Master—a comparatively insignificant thing or incident, a book, a

lecture, a picture—and then knowledge comes to them of the great facts of Reincarnation, of Karma, of the existence of the Path, of the existence of Those who have trodden the Path; and with that comes a longing not only to understand, but to be an instrument for the working out of the divine Plan in the scheme of evolution. Such a person discovers that there is a science called the Science of Yoga or the Science of Union, and he sees stretching before him the beginning of the Path, and learns the qualifications necessary for its treading.

Yoga is the application of the laws of evolution of the human mind to the individual, so that a man can thereby quicken the evolution of his mind and outstrip his race in order to help the world; it is the way by which a man may hasten his evolution, expand his consciousness and rise into union with the Divine. But Yoga requires a Discipline of Life. The ordinary laws of Nature carry us along ordinary evolution, but if we increase the stress for a swifter evolution, we must strengthen those parts of ourselves which are subjected to that strain. A man wanting to do in a brief space of time what the vast majority of his race will take hundreds of thousands of years in accomplishing must prepare his unprepared body and his untrained mind by the Discipline of Life and acquire, at least to some extent, the Qualifications for Discipleship before he can enter even the Probationary Path.

Q. Of the two requirements, the Discipline of Life and the Qualifications for Discipleship, what is meant by the first?

Ans. The Discipline of Life is a rigid self-discipline for purification—purification of all the temporary vehicles, of the physical body and the lower nature, of the emotions

and the mind. Alcoholic drinks of all kinds should be given up, because the practice which leads to the seeking of a Master necessitates meditation, concentrated and definite, intended to stimulate and develop certain physical organs in the brain, and alcoholic vapours and narcotic drugs have a poisonous effect upon those organs.

Again, flesh-food of all kinds is to be dropped, for it coarsens the body as explained in Chapter I. Apart from the question of compassion, a student of Yoga requires a body, strong and resistant, as well as sensitive and responsive to the vibrations from the subtle worlds of matter and of life.

The aspirant should then purify the astral body and acquire self-control, training the lower nature until it is absolutely subject to the will. He should cleanse the desire-nature from every touch of the personal self and purge it of everything which makes it separate from those that are below as well as from Those that are above, thus breaking down the walls of separateness. But while striking away everything that is personal, he must retain the essence of all the numerous qualities which he has acquired as the result of his incessant climbing of the Ladder of Life.

For the better understanding of the purification of the lower nature some illustrations may be found useful. Let us first take that mighty force which is developed in the lower stages of the growth of every human being, but which is now required to be purified—the force of anger or wrath. We see it in the undeveloped man in the brutal form of passion, beating down all opposition to the gratification of his will. In order to train that passion of anger the man first gets rid of the personal element by forgiveness of injury as one of his duties, giving love for hatred,

overcoming evil with good. There still remains an impersonal anger. He sees a poor man oppressed or an animal ill-treated, and he gets angry with the oppressor. That impersonal anger, noble indignation, nobler than stolid indifference, has to be transmuted into the quality of doing justice both to the weak and to the strong, compassionating the wrong-doer as well as the wronged, as the wrong-doer through ignorance injures himself more than the person wronged, by his storing up of evil karma for the future, and therefore requires help and training. The man stops the wrong-doing because it is his duty to do so, but recognising the Divine even in the heart of the wrong-doer, is gentle to him, transmuting the anger by spiritual alchemy into perfect justice which stops all wrong, and helps the tyrant as well as the slave, the oppressor as well as the oppressed.

So again with love, sensual love that showed itself in forms, foul and vile, becoming nobler and less selfish, moralised, refined and purified, being transmuted by spiritual alchemy into a love that in going out to others seeks to serve them rather than to serve itself, seeks how much it may give rather than how much it may take, and thus gradually becomes divine in its essence.

Similarly, covetousness, selfishness and other passions of the lower nature must be burnt up and purified all through, in the Discipline of Life. Yoga is thus accomplished by temperate self-control, by the deliberate training of the lower nature, by quietly choosing pure materials for food and by care and moderation in all physical activities.

Q. Now as to the second requirement; what are the qualifications demanded ere entrance to the Probationary Path be gained?

Ans. The first of the qualifications, necessary to a considerable extent before discipleship is possible, is control of thought. When we say that a man is self-controlled, what we ordinarily mean is that his intellectual or higher nature with its mind and will, with its reasoning power and judgment, is stronger than his lower nature with its passions and emotions. That self-control in the ordinary sense of the word is an admirable quality truly, but very much more than that, more than control of the lower nature by the higher, is wanted by a candidate for discipleship. We have already studied the creative power and influence of thought in Chapter VII, and thus know that a deliberate control of thought is necessary in the systematic training of the mind—thinking deliberately and with a purpose behind the thought, refusing to harbour the cast-off fragments of the thoughts of others and concentrating thought on one idea by constant practice in daily life.

This control of thought is a necessary condition for discipleship, because when a man becomes a disciple, his thoughts gain added power and increased vitality and energy. By a thought a man can kill another or heal a disease ; by a thought he can influence a crowd or create a visible illusion ; and so before these mighty powers come within his reach, he should learn to control his thoughts, check all evil in them and harbour nothing save what is pure, beneficent and useful.

Another important qualification is meditation, the deliberate and formal training of the mind in concentration and in fixity of thought. Daily practice of meditation, devotional as well as intellectual, is necessary. The candidate in the hour of his morning-meditation should learn to concentrate his mind on the Divine Ideal, the Teacher whom he ultimately hopes to find ; while for intellectua

meditation which is concerned with the gradual and conscious building of character, he should choose some good quality as the subject of his meditation and should build it in his life by the conjoint process of meditation and action. He should meditate on purity, truth, compassion, fearlessness, forgiveness, chastity, etc., one after another, and should build a noble character by working out those virtues in the speech and actions of daily life.

Every one who meditates upon the Master makes a definite connection with Him, which shows itself to clairvoyant vision as a kind of line of light. The Master always subconsciously feels the impinging of such a line and sends out in response a steady stream of magnetism which continues to play long after the meditation is over. The regular practice of such meditation and concentration is thus of the utmost help to the aspirant, and regularity is one of the most important factors in producing the result. It should be undertaken daily at the same hour, and he should steadily persevere with it, even though no obvious effect may be produced. When no result appears he must be especially careful to avoid depression, because that makes it more difficult for a Master's influence to act upon him, and it also shows that he is thinking of himself more than of the Master.

Thus control of thought, daily meditation and noble character are the three main qualifications for Probation or probationary discipleship, but one quality underlies them all, and that is earnestness, the earnestness which has recognised its object and definitely seeks its goal.

Q. What is the object of the stage called Probation? How and why is a man taken first as a probationary pupil?

Ans. When an aspirant has by the practice of Yoga purified all his vehicles, and has, by unselfish labour for

human good, by devotion, piety, purity and self-sacrifice, by control of thought, meditation and nobility of character, struggled onwards to the front crest of the advancing human wave, showing a selfless nature all through in the service of man, then he finds his Master, or rather his Master finds him. But before He definitely accepts him as a pupil, He takes special precautions to assure Himself that the man is fit enough to be drawn into intimate contact with Himself ; and that is the object of the stage called Probation. The Master subjects the aspirant to the test of time, for many people, swept upwards by enthusiasm, appear at first to be most promising and eager to serve, but unfortunately become tired after a while, and slip back. Throughout the struggle those gracious eyes have been watching his progress, and at a certain stage in that progress when he receives, through a senior pupil, the Master's summons to enter into His physical presence which he usually does in his astral body, the Master reveals Himself to him and places him definitely on Probation. There is not generally much ceremony connected with this step ; the Master gives a few words of advice, tells the new pupil what will be expected of him, and often, in His gracious way, He may find some reason to congratulate him on the work that he has already accomplished.

A pupil is put on Probation in response to a demand, made by him to the Guardians of Humanity, to be given opportunities for a swifter progress than is normal with ordinary humanity. His individual karma has at the same time to be readjusted, freeing him from such types of karma as may limit his further usefulness and giving him greater opportunities for wider knowledge and more effective service.

When a Master takes an aspirant as a probationary pupil, it is with the expectation of presenting him for Initiation in that life. But simply because a Master has responded to his aspiration, it does not follow that the pupil will succeed; the opportunity is given to him because he has earned it as a kârmic right, but what he makes of that opportunity depends solely on himself. Still he is very likely to succeed if he "means business" and works strenuously in the service of the world.

Q. What are the ordinary faults in everyday life which act as hindrances to the progress of the probationary pupil?

Ans. Irritability is a common fault; the torturing noises of our present civilisation and the pressure of so many astral bodies vibrating at different rates make it very difficult to avoid irritability—especially for the pupil, whose bodies are more highly strung and sensitive than those of the ordinary man. Of course, this irritation is somewhat superficial; yet some slight temporary feeling may produce an effect lasting for forty-eight hours. When such a fault as this is known, it can most effectually be removed not by focussing attention upon it, but by endeavouring to develop the opposite virtue, as explained before. One way of dealing with it is to set one's thought steadfastly against it, but there is no doubt that this course of action arouses opposition in the mental or astral elemental, so that often a better method is to try to develop consideration for others, based of course fundamentally on one's love towards them. A man who is full of love and consideration will not allow himself to speak or even to think irritably towards them. If the man can be filled with that idea the same result will be attained without exciting opposition from the elementals.

There are many other forms of selfishness that can delay the pupil's progress very seriously. Laziness is one form of these. A person enjoying himself very much with a book will not like to leave it in order to be punctual; another will write very badly, careless of the inconvenience and the damage to the eyes and the temper of those who have to read his caligraphy. All such things tend to make one less sensitive to high influences, to make life untidy and ugly for other persons, and to destroy self-control and efficiency. Efficiency and punctuality are essential, if satisfactory work is to be done. Many people are inefficient; when a piece of work is given to them, they do not finish it thoroughly, but make all kinds of excuses; or when they are asked for some information, they do not know how to find it. People differ much in this respect. One person may be asked a question, and he will answer: "I don't know"; but another will say: "Well, I don't know, but I will go and find out," and he returns with the required information.

Yet in all good work the pupil must always think of the benefit that will result to others and of the opportunity to serve the Master in these matters—which even when they are materially small are great in spiritual value—and not of the good karma resulting to himself, which would be only another and very subtle form of self-centredness.

Other subtle effects of the same kind are to be seen in depression and jealousy, and aggressive assertion of one's rights. An Adept has said: "Think less about your rights and more about your duties." There are some occasions in dealing with the outside world when the pupil might find it necessary gently to state what he needs, but amongst his fellow-pupils there are no such

things as rights, but only opportunities. If a man feels annoyed, he begins to shoot out from himself aggressive feelings; he may not go so far as actual hatred, but he is setting up a dull glow in his astral body and affecting his mental body as well.

Similar disturbances are frequently set up in the mental body, and are equally disastrous in their effects. If a man allows himself to be greatly worried over some problem, and turns it over and over again in his mind without reaching any conclusion, he has thereby set up something like a storm in his mental body. There are some argumentative people who must argue about everything, and apparently love the exercise so much that they scarcely care on which side of the problem they are engaged. A person of that sort has his mental body in a condition of perpetual inflammation, and the inflammation is liable on very slight provocation to break out at any moment into an actual open sore. For such a one there is no hope of any kind of occult progress, until he has brought balance and common-sense to bear on this diseased condition.

Those approaching the Masters must be utterly free from all that is boisterous and rough. Again, there is sometimes a tendency towards inane giggling which has a very bad effect on the astral body. It weaves round it a web of grey-brown threads, very unpleasant to look upon, which forms a layer which hinders the entrance of good influences. Joyousness should not be allowed, on the one hand, to be tinged by any sort of roughness or rudeness, nor, on the other, to degenerate into silly giggling.

Especially is it necessary for the aspirant to avoid all fidgetiness or fussiness; for by yielding to these failings, he sets up around him such an aura of tremulous

vibrations that no thought or feeling can pass in or out without distortion.

A clairvoyant who can see the effect upon the higher bodies of the various undesirable emotions finds no difficulty in understanding how important it is that they should be controlled. But because most persons cannot see the result they are liable to forget it, and allow themselves to become careless. If the pupil who has been put on Probation could see, while awake in his physical body, the living images that the Master makes, he would understand much more fully the importance of what may seem to be but minor details. If he can cultivate the habit of taking the right point of view, of acting for the right reasons, and of being in the right attitude, all along, and can work strenuously and unselfishly under the guidance of a senior pupil of the Master, he will considerably quicken his progress and will steadily draw nearer and nearer to the ideal of the Masters.

Q. How does the senior pupil guide the younger pupil in his progress?

Ans. Very much help by example as well as by way of definite instructions on all sorts of matters including the formation of character is often given to the aspirant, both probationary and accepted, by the presence of an older pupil of the Master. As stated before, when a guru selected his chelas in the early days in India, he formed them into a group and took them about with him wherever he went; and though often they received no instruction, yet they made rapid progress, because all the time they were within the aura of the teacher and were being brought into harmony with it, instead of being surrounded by ordinary influences. The Masters cannot adopt that

plan physically, but They have sometimes arranged matters so that some of Their elder pupils can draw round themselves a group of the younger ones, and attend to them individually, much as a gardener would deal with his plants, raying upon them day and night the influences needed to awaken certain qualities or strengthen weak points. The older pupil rarely receives direct instructions with regard to this work ; though now and then the Master may make some remark or comment.

The fact that the pupils are together in a group also assists their progress ; they are influenced in common by high ideals, and this hastens the growth of desirable characteristics. It is probably inevitable in the course of kârmic law that one who is aspiring shall be brought into contact with someone more advanced than himself, and receive much benefit through his ability to respond to him ; and generally the Master does not advance or raise any person unless he has been with an older pupil who can guide and help him, though there are exceptions, and each Master has His own way of dealing with His pupils. Thus the aspirant is trained and makes rapid progress under the guidance of some senior pupil of His Master.

Q. Now what is the work to be accomplished by one who enters on the Probationary Path ? What is the life of the disciple in its early stages ?

Ans. The work is entirely moral and mental, and the probationer has to bring himself up to the point when he will "meet his Master face to face". He now finds that there are certain qualifications laid down for the treading of the Probationary Path, the Path of Purification of the Christian Church, and that he has to acquire them not by a vague wish, but by daily meditation and practice in life.

There are four qualifications required of a probationary pupil before he can become an accepted disciple, though in this stage nothing like perfect performance is demanded from him. Those qualifications are given in detail in that admirable little book, *At the Feet of the Master*, which has been translated into twenty-seven languages and of which there have been some forty editions or more with over a hundred thousand copies printed; we can simply give an outline here with their technical names in Sanskrit (used by Hindus) and Pali (used by Buddhists).

I. *Viveka*—discrimination between the real and the unreal, between the eternal and the transitory; also between the right and the wrong, the important and the unimportant, the useful and the useless, the true and the false, the selfish and the unselfish. The pupil should develop a discrimination between fleeting things like fame, power and social position, and lasting things like mental, moral and spiritual qualities. He must learn to discern the God within from the passions and follies without, and seeing the Divine, the best, in every man and in everything—no matter how evil he or it may appear on the surface—must learn to identify himself with that best in order to help. This quality is called *Manodvāravajjana* or the opening of the doors of the mind, among the Buddhists.

II. *Vairāgya*—desirelessness or dispassion. The ordinary desires, fleeting fancies, likings and dislikings, making up so much of a man's life, have not to be killed out, but to be transcended and transmuted into the higher, to be changed into the one desire to be in perfect accord with the Divine Will. For example, weak, selfish human love can have its animal side transcended with that love turned into selfless love for all humanity. As the disciple sees the unreality of things around him, worldly objects

lose their attractive power, and out of indifference to the objects grows indifference for their fruits which also are recognised as unreal and impermanent. He is not to cease from activity ; yet he is not to be ambitious, though working like those who are. One test of desirelessness is that he should be able to see without a pang of regret his whole project of years crumbling into dust. All disappointment or regret comes from thought of self and implies desire for the fruit of action. Moreover, so long as an ungratified desire can cause him unhappiness, he is still identifying himself with his desires. He should "never wish to shine or to appear clever, have no desire to speak" and "be accustomed to listen rather than to talk," sternly repressing "the wish to meddle in other men's business". Thus when *Viveka* is really felt, not merely said, all desire for worldly objects ceases, and *Vairāgya* follows in the wake of *Viveka* as the wheel follows the horse. Among the Buddhists it is known as *Parikamma*, preparation for action ; indifference to the fruit of action, acquired by doing right without considering one's own gain or loss.

III. *Shatsampatti*—the sixfold group of mental qualities or attributes, Mental Endowments, sometimes called Good Conduct, qualities most necessary for the pupil ; called *Upachāro*, attention to conduct, among the Buddhists. Those qualities are given as

1. *Shama*—control of thought. It is more often the mind that controls the man than the man that controls the mind. There should be the control of temper with the mind calm and courageous, without worry or depression, and this self-control as to the mind is absolutely necessary, for unless the mind moves only in obedience to the guidance of the will, it cannot be a perfect

instrument for the Master's work in the future. This qualification is a very comprehensive one, and includes within itself both the self-control and the calmness necessary for astral work.

2. *Dama*—control of conduct, self-control in action, control in act and speech. Much mischief is caused by thoughtless or unkind speech or careless repetition, but if the thought be right, conduct will follow suit. "Before the voice can speak in the presence of the Masters, it must have lost the power to wound." The pupil should do all his ordinary duties, be constantly active in good work and "be always ready to offer help where it is needed, but *never* interfere".

3. *Uparati*—tolerance; a kind and noble tolerance of all around him, able to understand all and demanding from none more than he can give. It is the recognition of the right of another to think for himself without the slightest interference from others. With this tolerant attitude he should look on all from within and see their aspirations, desires and motives, and though knowing that no ceremonies are necessary, should yet refrain from condemning those who cling to them. Freed from all bigotry and superstition, he should learn to be tolerant of all forms of religion, all varieties of custom, all beliefs and traditions of men, knowing them as so many outward appearances of the same fundamental Truth.

4. *Titikshā*—endurance. This virtue is also translated as cheerfulness, as it implies the readiness to bear, with cheerfulness and gladness, whatever one's karma may bring, and to part with anything and everything worldly whenever it may be necessary. The pupil understands that "Nothing matters much and most things matter not at all," and unperturbed by joy or sorrow

knows that " This too shall pass away " and that " Whatever is, is best ". Realising that whatever comes to him in the form of troubles of mind or body, of family or business, is of his own creation in the past, and that those who do him wrong are but the instruments of his own karma, he bears all, not only with a total absence of resentment, but with absolute cheerfulness. He also knows that he is of little use to the Master till his evil karma is fully worked out, and so he cheerfully welcomes any quickening of his karma, working out now in one or two lives what otherwise might extend over a hundred, thus paying in enormous difficulties and troubles for what he gains in time.

5. *Shraddhā*—faith, confidence. It is the deep inner conviction of his own divinity and therefore of his power to achieve; the strong faith in his own divinity, not yet realised but felt; the perfect confidence in his Master and in himself. Knowing that " Unless there is perfect trust, there cannot be the perfect flow of love and power," he trusts to the uttermost his Master who has taught and guided him and who will lead him through the thorny path to the gate of Initiation; and through confidence in his divine self he believes that " What man (now his Master) has done, man (he himself) can do ".

6. *Samādhāna*—balance, composure, peace of mind, equilibrium unshaken by sorrow or joy. It is one-pointedness in the Master's work which the pupil has set before him to do; one-pointedness in following the Path from which no temptations, worldly pleasure or affections can turn him aside even for a moment.

IV. *Mumukshutva*—desire for liberation (from the wheel of births and deaths) as the Hindu calls it; *Anuloma*—direct order or succession—as the Buddhist names it, its attainment following on the other three

qualifications. It is really the will to be one with the Supreme ; and because the Supreme is Love, and because a person who would become one with Him must be filled with perfect unselfishness and love, love raised from the human to the divine, a Master names this fourth qualification as Love, and brands the three vices of gossip, cruelty and superstition as sins against love. The pupil must not only refrain from evil, but must be active in doing good and must ever be on the watch to render service to all men, animals and plants around him. He must yearn to be one with God, not for his own sake, but in order that he may be a channel through which His love and life may flow to others.

The perfect attainment of these accomplishments and qualifications is not expected at this early stage, but when the pupil has acquired them so as to mark his character, he is called the Adhikāri by the Hindu and the Gotrabhū (one in the condition of fitness for Initiation) by the Buddhist. "Only those actions through which shines the light of the Cross are worthy of the life of the disciple," says one of the verses in a book of occult maxims ; and this means that all that the aspirant does should be prompted by a fervour of self-sacrificing love. He has trodden the Probationary Path which leads up to the "Strait Gate" of Initiation, beyond which is the "ancient narrow way," the path "difficult to tread as the sharp edge of the razor," the "Path of Holiness".

Q. Does the Master give to the probationary pupil any special work to be done or any advice and instruction ?

Ans. In the case of elder people put upon Probation, they are left to a large extent to find the most suitable work for themselves ; but with the younger people He sometimes quite definitely puts a piece of work in the

way of one of them and watches to see how he does it. He condescends sometimes to give special messages of encouragement and instruction to individuals among these young people, and even to give special advice as to their training. For the guidance of other young people who desire to follow along the same path extracts from some of those messages are given here :

“ I know that your one object in life is to serve the Brotherhood ; yet do not forget that there are higher steps before you, and that progress on the Path means sleepless vigilance. You must not only be always *ready* to serve ; you must be ever watching for opportunities—nay, *making* opportunities—to be helpful in small things, in order that when the greater work comes you may not fail to see it.

“ Never for a moment forget your occult relation ship ; it should be an ever-present inspiration to you—not only a shield from the fatuous thoughts which float around us, but a constant stimulus to spiritual activity. The vacuity and pettiness of ordinary life should be impossible for us, though not beyond our comprehension and compassion.

“ Each must realise that there are other points of view than his own and that they may be just as worthy of attention. All coarseness or roughness of speech, all tendency to argumentativeness, must absolutely disappear ; one who is prone to it should check himself when the impulse towards it arises ; he should say little, and that always with delicacy and courtesy. Never speak without first thinking whether what you are going to say is both kind and sensible.

“ Thoughts and feelings of an undesirable kind must be rigorously excluded ; you must work at them until they are impossible to you. Touches of irritability ruffle the calm sea of the consciousness of the Brotherhood. Pride must be eliminated, for it is a serious bar to progress. Exquisite delicacy of thought and speech is needed—the rare aroma of perfect tact which can never

jar or offend. That is hard to win, yet you may reach it if you will.

“Definite service, and not mere amusement, should be your aim; think, not what you want to do, but what you can do that will help someone else; forget about yourself, and consider others. A pupil must be consistently kind, obliging, helpful—not now and then, but all the time. Remember, all time which is not spent in service (or fitting yourself for service) is for us *lost* time.

“When you see certain evils in yourself, take them in hand manfully and effectively. Persevere, and you will succeed. It is a question of will-power. Watch for opportunities and hints; be efficient. I am always ready to help you, but I cannot do the work *for* you; the effort must come from *your* side. Try to deepen yourself all round and to live a life of utter devotion to service.

“You have done well, but I want you to do better yet. I have tested you by giving you opportunities to help, and so far you have taken them nobly. I shall therefore give you more and greater opportunities, and your progress will depend upon your recognising them and availing yourself of them. Remember that the reward of successful work is always the opening out before you of more work and that faithfulness in what seem to you small things leads to employment in matters of greater importance. I hope that you will soon draw closer to Me, and in so doing will help your brothers along the Path which leads to the feet of the King. Be thankful that you have a great power of love, that you know how to flood your world with sunlight, to pour yourself out with royal prodigality, to scatter largess like a king; that indeed is well, but take care lest in the heart of this great flower of love there should be a tiny touch of pride, which might spread as does an almost invisible spot of decay, until it has tainted and corrupted the whole blossom. Remember what our great Brother has written: ‘Be humble if thou wouldst attain to wisdom; be humbler still when wisdom thou hast mastered.’ Cultivate that modest fragrant plant, humility, until its sweet aroma permeates every fibre of your being.

"I welcome you, the latest recruit to our glorious band. It is not easy for you to forget yourself entirely, to yield yourself without reservation to the service of the world; yet that is what is required of us—that we should live only to be a blessing to others, and to do the work which is given us to do. You have made a good beginning in the process of self-development, but much yet remains to be done. Repress even the slightest shade of irritability, and be ready always to receive advice and instruction; cultivate humility and self-sacrifice, and fill yourself with a fervid enthusiasm for service. So shall you be a fitting instrument in the hand of the Great Master, a soldier in the army of Those who save the world. To help you in that I now take you as a probationary pupil."

Q. What, now, becomes of the pupil after he has acquired the four qualifications in the probationary stage? What is the period for that stage and what is his relation to his Master during that and the other following stages?

Ans. When a man has acquired the qualifications necessary for entrance upon the stage of the probationary pupil, the Master calls him astrally into His presence as stated before, takes him upon Probation, and keeps him under close observation for an average period of seven years, though that period is known to have been lengthened to thirty years in the case of an unsatisfactory candidate and reduced to only a few weeks in one quite exceptional case. During that period of Probation the pupil, though receiving during sleep much teaching from his Master, using his astral body as a vehicle of consciousness for the astral work of help, and learning also much of the life of the mental plane during meditation, does not come in direct communication with his Master and hears or sees nothing of Him.

The Probation or proving of the pupil consists in testing him to see how far he can withstand the shocks of

his karma which has to be hastened, and yet remain firm in his altruism, in spite of the fact that his life becomes more barren of those satisfactions and delights which make life worth living for most men. He is also tested to see if he understands that "A small thing which is directly useful in the Master's work is far better worth doing than a large thing which the world would call good," and adapts himself sufficiently to be an eager worker and servant of the Master in His numerous activities for the evolution of humanity. The pupil is thus put on Probation less to gain knowledge from the Master and more to train himself as an apprentice to help the Master in His work. He is consequently expected to harmonise his methods of work to those of his Master, to be ready to co-operate with his fellow-apprentices and in all ways to prove that an Ideal of work weighs more with him than his personal satisfaction as a worker. But then during this period, though full of tests and trials of all sorts on all planes, relieved at times by encouraging experiences and hints and help, no special difficulties are, as a rule, put in his way, and he is simply watched carefully by the Master in his attitude towards the little daily troubles of life. For convenience of observation the Master makes what is called a 'living image' of the pupil—that is to say, He moulds out of mental, astral and etheric matter an exact counterpart of the causal, mental, astral and etheric bodies of the neophyte, and keeps that image at hand, so that He may look at it periodically. Each image is magnetically attached to the person whom it represents, so that every variation of thought and feeling in him is accurately reproduced in it by sympathetic vibration, and thus by a single glance at the image the Master can see at once whether during the period since He last looked at it

there has been any sort of disturbance in the bodies which it represents—whether the man has been losing his temper, or allowing himself to be a prey to impure feelings, worry, depression, or anything of the kind.

If that prospective pupil's progress in the acquisition of the four qualifications, outlined before, as well as the perfectly accurate record of his thoughts and feelings, read through the living image, is found satisfactory, another summons comes from the Master who then dissolves the living image and takes the pupil into the far closer relationship of the second stage—the stage of the accepted pupil—and gives him illuminating teaching to help him more swiftly on his way. He now becomes a channel for the forces of the Master and an intelligent co-operator with Him, an outpost of his Master's consciousness. In order to have his vehicles harmonised and attuned by close association with the Master, he is taken into his Master's consciousness so intimately, that whatever he sees or hears is within the knowledge of the Master; and if unfortunately some thought, unfit to be harboured by the Master, comes into the consciousness of the pupil, the Master has at once to erect a barrier to shut off that vibration from Himself. But as that directs the attention of the Master and takes a certain amount of His energy, the pupil has to guard himself very carefully against thoughts, not only definitely evil or selfish, but even trifling or critical. Being in this way in close touch with his Master's thoughts, he can at any time see what that thought is upon any given subject, test his judgment by the judgment of the Master on the subject by raising his consciousness for the moment to touch the fringe of his Master's consciousness, and thus save himself from error; while the Master can at any moment send a thought

through the pupil in the form of either a suggestion or a message, though in the earlier stages the pupil supposes those ideas to have arisen spontaneously in his own mind.

Then there is the third stage of even more intimate union when the pupil becomes what is called the 'Son' of the Master, and the link is such that not only the lower mind but also the ego in the causal body of the pupil is enfolded within that of the Adept. That is brought about only after the Master has, through considerable experience of the man as an accepted disciple, satisfied Himself that nothing unworthy, requiring to be shut off, will ever arise in the mind or astral body of the pupil; for though the accepted pupil can be switched off when desired, the 'Son,' drawn into a close and sacred union, cannot be so shut off or have his consciousness separated from that of the Master even for a moment. He who is a Son of the Master either already is or will soon become a member of the Great White Brotherhood also. Being a ray of his Master's consciousness, the pupil now comes to possess a depth of wisdom which is not his own, but is given to him for use by his Master. Nevermore can the pupil be alone; in griefs and in joys, in darkness and in light, the Master's consciousness enfolds that of the pupil, even though at times the latter may not be aware of that glorious fact.

At each stage, from Probation to Acceptance and thence to Initiation, the Master formally presents His pupil to the Mahāchohān and the pupil's name and rank are entered by that Keeper of the Records of the Occult Hierarchy in His imperishable Record.

The intervals of time between the various stages on the Probationary Path depend upon the initiative and the capabilities of the pupil. It may occasionally happen that behind some particular pupil there may exist a great

accumulated karma of service which may give him the strength and the opportunities which others have not earned. Still a forceful and determined pupil may override all obstacles and "enter the Path" swiftly, while one who lets opportunities slip by may have to spend decades in one stage before passing to the next. All pupils receive the inspiration of the Master equally, but each assimilates from it according to his own capacity.

The probationary discipleship, the accepted discipleship and the sonship are merely personal relations between the Master and the pupil, and have nothing to do with Initiations or steps on the Path Proper, which are tokens of the man's relation to the Great White Brotherhood and its august Head.

Q. What is Initiation and what is its object?

Ans. It is the expansion of consciousness, the widening out of consciousness to embrace the superphysical as well as the physical, the ceremony of Initiation being a series of actual events through which a man, out of the physical body, passes in the presence of the great assembly of the Masters. The man with his expanded consciousness as with a new sense conferred on him, with the key of knowledge opening up to him new vistas of power and knowledge for the service of humanity, becomes conscious of a new world which then comes within his power of study, within his faculty to investigate and to know. On the three lower planes—the physical, the astral and the mental, often spoken of as "the three worlds," the well-known Triloki or Tribhuvanam of the Hindu cosmogony—is proceeding the normal evolution of humanity. On the next two planes—spiritual, those of Wisdom and Power, the Buddhic and the Ātmic—goes on the specific evolution of the Initiate, after the First of the Great Initiations.

The First Initiation admits the disciple as a member of the lowest rank in that great Brotherhood which governs the world. The Initiation is given by an appointed Member of the Brotherhood in the Name of the One Initiator, and the ceremony of Initiation is an official examination, demonstrating the candidate's fitness so to use the new powers to be conferred on him that he may become a better helper in the world of men. The mysteries of Greece and Rome, as well as modern Freemasonry, are faint imitations of the real ceremony itself and of the tests which the candidate undergoes.

Most people when they think of Initiation have in mind a step to be gained for themselves. They think of the Initiate as a man who has developed himself very highly, and has become a great and glorious figure, as compared with the man of the outer world. That is true; but the importance of Initiation does not lie in the exaltation of an individual, but in the fact that he has now become definitely one with a great Order, the 'Communion of Saints', as it is very beautifully put in the Christian Church, though few ever pay attention to the real meaning of those words.

The entry into the Brotherhood of Those who rule the world is the third of the great critical points in man's evolution. The first of these is when he becomes a man—when he individualises out of the animal kingdom and obtains a causal body. The second is what is called by the Christian, 'conversion' and by the Hindu, the acquirement of discrimination, or *Viveka*, as explained before. The third point is the most important of all, for the Initiation which admits him to the ranks of the Brotherhood also insures him against the possibility of failure to fulfil the divine purpose in the time appointed for it in the

present stream of evolution, and not drop out at the 'Day of Judgment' in the next Round. Hence those who have reached this point are called in the Christian system the 'elect,' the 'saved' or the 'safe'. The words used in admitting a candidate to the Great Brotherhood at the stately ceremony of the First Initiation include that very verse: "You are now safe for ever; you have now entered upon the stream; may you soon reach the further shore"—the further shore being Adeptship, the next great stage for the Initiate.

Of these Initiations—these ceremonials on the Path leading to Perfection—there are five, the Fifth being that of the Adept (or the Master). At the First Great Initiation there is the definite union of the ego and the personality of the candidate. He has to pass the Second, Third and Fourth Initiations before he reaches Adeptship, which is the Fifth; but when he gains that Fifth, he unites the Monad and the ego just as before he had united the ego and the personality; so that when he has achieved the union of the higher and the lower self—when his personality no longer exists except as an expression of the ego—he has to begin the very same process over again, as it were, and make that ego an expression of the Monad before attainment of Adeptship, which signalises his departure from the human kingdom and his entry into the superhuman.

Q. What, then, is the Path which finally leads to Perfection?

Ans. The Path leading to Initiation and thence to the Perfecting of man is recognised in all great religions, and its chief features are described in similar terms. In the Roman Catholic teachings it is divided into three parts: 1. The Path of Purification or Purgation. 2. The Path

of Illumination. 3. The Path of Union with Divinity. Among the Musalmans, in the Sufi—mystic—teachings of Islam, it is known as the Way, the Truth and the Life. In Hinduism and Buddhism we find it divided into two parts, again subdivided. The Probationary Path of the Hindu and the Buddhist, where certain moral qualifications have to be developed, is the Path of Purification of the Christian. For this portion of the Path, while the Christian lays more stress on the passive fact of purification, the Eastern lays more stress on the active acquirement of high qualifications—one rather the negative side, and the other the active side of positive achievement. The Path of Holiness, the second part of the Path according to the Hindu and the Buddhist, is divided into four stages, of which the first two represent the Path of Illumination, and the last two the Path of Union, of the Christian. Each of these four stages is marked by an expansion of consciousness and is entered by a special Initiation, symbolised among Christians as the Birth, Baptism, Transfiguration, and Crucifixion and Resurrection of the Christ. At the end of the fourth stage comes the attainment of Adeptship, (or Masterhood,) Liberation, Final Salvation, symbolised by the Ascension of the Christ and the Descent of the Holy Spirit.

Q. On what conditions or qualifications does the fitness for Initiation of the pupil depend ?

Ans. The question as to whether a man is approaching fitness for Initiation involves three separate sets of considerations, all depending upon one another. The first is as to whether he is in possession of a sufficient amount of the necessary qualifications as laid down in *At the Feet of the Master*, and that means that he must have a

minimum of all, and very much more than a minimum of some of them. Secondly, the ego must have so trained his lower vehicles that he can function perfectly through them when he wishes to do so ; he must have effected what in our earlier Theosophical literature was called the junction of the lower and the higher self—of the personality and the ego ; and thirdly, he must be strong enough to stand the great strain involved, which extends even to the physical body.

Q. At what level of progress is a pupil initiated ?

Ans. There is a great variety as to the levels of progress at which pupils are initiated. All Initiates are unequal in development just as all men who have taken the degree of M.A. are unequal in knowledge. A man might have done exceedingly well in many of the subjects required, and be far beyond the total minimum, and yet be seriously deficient and below the minimum standard in one subject ; it would, then, of course be necessary for him to wait till he had the minimum in that neglected subject, and no doubt while he was acquiring that, he would be developing the others still further. It is therefore obvious that while there is a certain attainment required for Initiation, some of those who are presented for it may have achieved far more than that in some directions. It will be thus seen that there is likely to be considerable variation in the interval between Initiations. One man who has just now been able to take the First, may nevertheless possess a considerable share of the qualifications for the Second ; therefore for him the interval between the two might be unusually short. On the other hand, a candidate who had only just sufficient strength in all directions to enable him to pass through the First, would have slowly to develop within himself all the additional

faculties and knowledge necessary for the Second, so his interval would probably be long.

We have now entered upon a period in the world's history in which progress at all levels of evolution can be very rapid, because the near coming of the World-Teacher has set up so strong a tide of thought and feeling about spiritual things, all in the direction of progress, that anyone who now makes an effort along that line finds himself swimming with the current and advancing swiftly.

A rapid occult progress is a very decided strain, and the student of occultism who sets before himself the idea of hastening his development should remember that one of the necessities is good physical health. He wishes to make in one life the progress which under ordinary circumstances would be distributed over fifty or more, and as the amount that has to be done is the same in either case, for no reduction whatever has been made in the standard of the requirements for Initiation, he must obviously work all his vehicles very much harder if he is to succeed.

Hitherto, except very rarely, persons have been initiated only after their physical bodies have come to mature age, and after they have proved by their activities in life that their hearts are pledged to the work of the Logos. During the last few years, however, certain egos whose bodies are still young have been given the privilege of Initiation, and this has been done in order that when the Lord comes He may find a band of young workers ready to serve Him. On His arrival, the World-Teacher will wield the wondrous consciousness of the Brotherhood, and the more helpers dwelling in physical bodies that He can draw round Him at any given place, the more will His work be facilitated. He can use the services of any ordinary man of the world to the extent of that man's

capacity ; but one who is already an accepted pupil of the Master would be of far more use to Him in many directions than the man of the world could ever be ; and of almost infinitely greater use still would be one who had passed the portal of Initiation and had awakened all the multiple links which bind together the members of the Brotherhood. It is always the ego who is initiated ; the age of the physical body which it happens to be holding at a given time has little to do with the case.

Q. How, then, does the pupil get initiated and become a member of the Great White Brotherhood ?

Ans. When the Master, after close identification of the pupil's consciousness with His own, is satisfied with him—coincident usually just before or after sonship—He presents him before the Brotherhood for the solemn ceremony of the First Initiation. The candidate is proposed and seconded by two of the higher members of the Brotherhood—of the rank of Adepts—one of Them being his own Master. The presentation is made in the first instance to the Mahāchobān, who then appoints one of the Masters to act as the Hierophant Initiator. Either in the Hall of Initiation, or in some other appointed place, the candidate is then formally initiated at a stately ceremony by the Hierophant Initiator, who in the name of the One Initiator receives the plighted vow of the candidate, and puts in his hand the new key of knowledge which he is to use on the level now attained.

Of the account of a First Initiation given to a candidate on the night of May 27th, 1915, it is said : “ In this case the Lord Maitreya was the Initiator, and consequently the ceremony took place in His garden. When the Master Morya or the Master Kuthumi performs the rite, it is usually held in the ancient cave-temple, the

entrance to which is near the bridge across the river between Their houses. There was a large gathering of the Adepts, all those whose names are familiar to us being present. The glorious garden was at its best; the rhododendron bushes were one blaze of crimson blossom, and the air was fragrant with the scent of the early roses. The Lord Maitreya sat in His usual place on the marble seat which runs round the great tree in front of His house; and the Masters grouped Themselves in a semicircle on His right and left, on seats which were placed for Them on the grass terrace from which the marble seat rises by a couple of steps. But the Lord Vaivasvata Manu and the Mahā-chohān sat also on the marble seat, one on each side of the arms of the specially raised carved throne which faces exactly south, which is called the Throne of Dakshina-murti."

What happens to the candidate is truly an 'initiation,' *i.e.*, a beginning. It is the beginning of a new form of existence, where the personality becomes steadily more and more a mere reflex of the ego, and the ego himself begins to draw upon the powers of the Monad. The soul of man is really that highest part of him which is the Monad; but from the moment when the Monad made the causal body out of the animal group-soul at individualisation, the "spark hangs from the Flame by the finest thread of Fohat". The ego, though linked thus to the Monad, has had, up to the moment of Initiation, no means of communication with that highest aspect of himself. But at Initiation, at the call of the Hierophant, the Monad descends into the causal body to take the vow of Initiation, to pledge himself to devote all his life and all his strength thenceforth to promote the work of evolution, to forget himself absolutely for the good of the world,

to make his life all love, even as God is all Love, and to keep secret those things which he is told to keep secret. From that moment, the 'finest thread of Fohat' becomes as a bundle of threads, and the ego, instead of hanging merely as a 'spark,' becomes as the end of a funnel, which reaches downwards from the Monad and brings life and light and strength to the candidate.

After his Initiation, the candidate is taken by his Master, or by a senior pupil, to the Buddhic plane, to be taught to function there in his Buddhic vehicle. Here now happens what has not happened before. Each night when the pupil left his body to work on the astral or the mental plane, his physical body, or his astral—one or both as the case may be—has been left behind on the bed, to be donned when he returned to them. When he now leaves the higher mental plane for the Buddhic plane, he of course leaves his causal body; but this causal body, instead of remaining with the physical, astral and mental bodies, vanishes. When the pupil, from his Buddhic vehicle, looks down on to the higher mental plane, no causal body is there any longer to represent him. The Christ said: "He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it." As Christ represents the Buddhic principle, the words mean: "He who for My sake—for the Christ development within him—will put aside the causal body in which he has been living for so long will find *himself*—will find the truer, grander and higher life." It needs some courage to do it. The first time a man is wholly in the Buddhic vehicle and finds that his causal body upon which he has been depending all these thousands of years has vanished—it is rather startling, and yet that is the way. He must lose his life for Christ's sake, if he wants to find it for all eternity. It is true that

when the pupil-initiate returns from his Buddhic body, he finds himself in a causal body again ; but it is not the causal body which he has had for millions of years since the day of individualisation, but a causal body which is a replica of that age-long house of his. With his first Buddhic experience the Initiate understands that he is not the ego, but something more transcendental, and also knows, not merely believes on faith, the Unity of all that lives—how all men's lives, their griefs as well as joys, failures as well as successes, are inseparable from his life.

To attain to the level of the First Great Initiation, a man must dominate his body by means of his soul ; he must so arrange that all his feelings are in harmony with the highest feeling. When the second of the great steps comes, the same process is carried a stage further, and the man's mind, and not only his feelings, is brought into tune with his Master's mind. It is of course, still infinitely below it, for he is only man, and very frail and human, while the Master rises above humanity as a Superman ; but nevertheless the pupil's thoughts should lie along the line of his Master's thoughts. Just as the man who is beginning to tread the Path says : " In these circumstances, what would the Master have done ? Let me do the same." So the man who has passed the second stage should watch his thought every moment, and say to himself : " What would the Master have thought in such a case as this ? How would this thing have envisaged itself to him ? "

Of these Initiations—these great ceremonials on the Path Proper—there are five as stated before.

Q. How do we find these Initiations among the Christian doctrines ?

Ans. The life of the Christ is not only a historical record, but is also the story of the unfolding human spirit

through the gateways of Initiation. He in whom the Christ is born, the Christ-child, the new Initiate, is spoken of all over the world as the 'little child' born in the new life of the spirit; and the expansion of consciousness he attains consists in his having opened to him the great spiritual world, in which all truths are known by intuition and not reasoning, knowledge becoming intuitive instead of rational. Because of the new world into which he is born, he is called twice-born; born on earth indeed many times, but always born into the life of matter; born now into the life of the spirit, which becomes his for evermore; and so also the First Great Initiation is spoken of as the 'second birth,' the 'birth of the Spirit'.

Thus the First Initiation is symbolised among the Christians by the Birth of the Christ when the Star in the East rises over the young Child; the second by the Baptism where the Spirit descends upon Him and dwells with Him for evermore; the Third by the Transfiguration on the Mount, where the inner Deity shines through. The Fourth Initiation is indicated by the suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of the Christ, while the Fifth is the Initiation of the Master, of the Perfected Man who has attained to the stature of the fulness of the Christ, the Saviour of men, and is symbolised by the Ascension and the Descent of the Holy Spirit.

The First Initiation is aptly symbolised in the mystery-drama by the Birth of the Christ, because at that stage there arises within the man a great change and a new power, which is well expressed by the idea of a birth. At the Second, there is a wonderful down-pouring of force from the Initiator to the candidate, which is typified by the Baptism of the Christ, or rather

by the Baptism of which He spoke—that of the Holy Ghost and of Fire; for it is the power of the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity that is outpoured at that moment, descending in what may but inadequately be described as a flood of fire, a flaming tide of living light.

The Third Initiation is typified in Christian symbolism by the Transfiguration of the Christ. He went up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before His disciples: "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light," "exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them". This description suggests the Augoeides, the glorified man, and it is an accurate picture of what happens at this Initiation, for just as the Second Great Initiation is principally concerned with the quickening of the lower mental body, so at this stage the causal body is especially developed. The ego is brought more closely into touch with the Monad, and is thus transfigured in very truth. Even the personality is affected by that wondrous outpouring. The higher and the lower self became one at the First Initiation, and that unity is never lost, but the development of the higher self that now takes place can never be mirrored in the lower worlds of form, although the two are one to the greatest possible extent.

Now in these steps, especially in the third, not only does the man come face to face with himself, with the God within him (the Monad to the ego, the ego to the personality, each is the higher self in relation to that which is below it), but he comes face to face also with the 'King', the One Initiator. In His name all Initiations are given, but in the first and second steps some Master acts for Him as a Deputy or Hierophant-Initiator,

although He acts only with the King's express permission through the Mahāchohān, as stated before. But the man who is so fortunate as to reach the third great step must come face to face with the King who, at this third step, either confers the Initiation Himself, or deposes one of His Pupils, the three Lords of the Flame who came with Him from Venus, to do so; and in the latter event the man is presented to the King soon after the Initiation has taken place. Thus the Christ is brought into the presence of His Father; the Buddhi in the Initiate is raised until it becomes one with its origin on the Nirvānic plane, and a very wonderful union between the first and the second principles in man is then effected. That is why, in connection with the Feast of the Transfiguration comes also the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, sometimes called the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or Candlemas Day.

The mystery-drama of the Christ-life symbolises not only man's progress, but also the descent of the Second Logos, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity into matter. First came the Annunciation, when the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity sends the First Outpouring down into matter, and so hovers over and permeates the virgin seas of matter which are typified in the Christian system by the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose Latin name, *Maria*, is plural of *Maree*, the sea. So she is the seas of matter of the different planes. The whole thing is a vast and beautiful allegory, in which that first descent is symbolised by the Annunciation; and a long time after that—the way having been slowly prepared by that Third Aspect, God the Holy Ghost—the Second Aspect, God the Son, descends into matter, and is born as on

Christmas Day. But that fructification of matter, that vivifying of it, takes time ; and so in the allegory it shows its result forty days later in the Festival of the Purification of the great seas of matter, which means their vivification and their elevation by the presence in them, the blossoming out through them, of this Second great Aspect. This result appears when the new-born Christ is presented to the Father ; that is to say, when the Third Outpouring which comes from the First Aspect, the First Person of the Blessed Trinity, comes upon it ; and that perfected purification of matter is typified by the presentation of the Christ in His House, His Temple, to His Father.

The Fourth Initiation differs from all the others in that it has this strange double aspect of suffering and victory. Each of the earlier Initiations was symbolised in the Christian system by one definite fact, the Birth, the Baptism, the Transfiguration ; but in order to represent this Fourth Initiation, a series of events has been found necessary. The Crucifixion and all the varied sufferings of which it was the culmination were employed to typify one side of this Initiation, while the Resurrection with its triumph over death represents the other side. Always at this stage there is suffering, physical, astral and mental ; always there is the condemnation by the world, and the apparent failure ; always there is the splendid triumph upon higher planes—which, however, remains unknown to the outer world. The peculiar type of suffering which invariably accompanies this Initiation clears off any arrears of karma which may still stand in the Initiate's way ; and the patience and joyousness with which he endures them have great value in the strengthening of his character, and help to determine the extent of his usefulness in the work which lies before him.

The Crucifixion and the Resurrection which symbolise the actual Initiation are thus described in an ancient Egyptian formula :

“Then shall the candidate be bound upon the wooden cross, he shall die, he shall be buried, and shall descend into the under-world ; after the third day he shall be brought back from the dead.”

In Christian symbolism the Ascension and the Descent of the Holy Spirit stand for the attainment of Adeptship, for the Adept does ascend clear above humanity, beyond this earth, although if He so chooses, as did the Christ, He may return to teach and help. As He ascends, He becomes one with the Holy Spirit, and invariably the first thing He does with His new power is to pour it down upon His disciples, even as the Christ poured down tongues of fire upon the heads of His followers at the feast of Pentecost. The triple Ātmā, the threefold Spirit of man, lies in the lower part of the Nirvānic or Spiritual plane, while the lowest manifestation of the Third Person, God the Holy Spirit, is in the higher part of the same plane. The Adept becomes one with the latter at that level and that is the real explanation of the Christian feast of Whitsun Day, the festival of the Holy Spirit.

This is the ancient pathway called the ‘ Kingdom of Heaven ’ or the ‘ Kingdom of God ’ ; also called the ‘ Way of the Cross ’ ; and the Cross is the symbol of life, of life triumphant over death, of Spirit triumphant over matter. There is no difference in the Path between the East and the West. There is only one occult teaching and one Great White Lodge. The Guardians of the spiritual treasures of our race recognise only qualifications and open the Gateway in the ancient fashion, which allows the man to tread the narrow, ancient Path. Those who

seek find, and to those who knock, the door is opened ; before those who knock with the hammer of the four qualifications, the door is swung open that they may find Him. Five, including the first, are the Portals on the Path, the fifth leading to the final divine Perfection of Manhood ; and the life of the Initiate, between the First and the Fifth Great Initiation—with the initial stage of the Birth of the Christ and the final one of the attainment of His full stature—is spoken of as the Christ-life.

Q. What is the life of the new Initiate and what is his work to fulfil the ideal of Divine Manhood, to attain liberation or final salvation ?

Ans. We now come to the Path Proper with its four stages, the full treading of which with the crossing of the fifth portal makes a disciple on the Path Superman as he attains his goal at the Fifth Great Initiation. Each Initiation must be prepared for by adequate experience and self-training. The First Initiation corresponds to the matriculation which admits a student to a University, and the attainment of Adeptship to the taking of a degree at the end of a course. Continuing the simile, there are three intermediate examinations, usually spoken of as the Second, Third and Fourth Initiations, Adeptship being the Fifth.

The stages on the Path of Holiness, as this process of spiritual unfoldment is called, are marked by expansions of consciousness, as stated before, and by the gift by the Great White Brotherhood of new knowledge and new powers to the Initiate. But before he can pass from one stage to another, the Brotherhood requires from him a record of work done for humanity, a freedom from specified mental and moral defects, and the possession of certain spiritual faculties. In particular, there are ten

Samyojana, or fetters, which bind man to the circle of rebirth and hold him back from Nirvāna, and which the pledged disciple—the Initiate—must therefore cast off one by one, before he can finally attain Adeptship. Here the Guru takes upon Himself the guidance, instruction and guardianship of His Chela who must now be entirely free of these clogs and must develop every quality completely, and not partially as during the probationary stage. The inner life of the disciple is full of joy, but it is not a life of ease, as the work which he has to do—the work of compression, into a few short lives, of the evolution of millions of years—often involves a terrible strain on his vehicles. He has to be very careful in everyday trifles, because, leading the occult life, he knows that “Trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle”. In the world of men his sincerity of purpose is often mistrusted, he is rejected and despised by all who surround him, and personal motives are attributed to him in all that he does.

I. After the First Great Initiation, after the Birth of the Christ within the pupil, he, who so far was *Pari-vrājaka* (the Wanderer, one who feels no place in the three lower worlds as his abiding-place or refuge) according to the Hindu, becomes *Kutichaka*, the Builder, the builder of the vehicles that he requires, or he who builds a hut; he has reached a place of peace. For the Buddhist he is *Sotāpatti* or *Sohan*, “He who has entered the stream,” the further side of which is Masterhood. The Initiate now must completely eradicate three weaknesses of human nature, must utterly get rid of three fetters which hold him back.

1. The delusion of self, or the sense of separateness (*Sakkāyadiṭṭhi*). The sense that he is separate from another, the ‘I am I’ consciousness which, as connected with the personality is nothing but an illusion, is still hard

to get rid of. But the First Initiation having brought him a touch of the Buddhic plane, the Chela has felt the complete unity of all that is ; and when the Initiate realises that, he realises his identity with the vagabond and the sinner as well as with the highest saint.

2. Doubt or uncertainty (*Vichikichchā*). This does not mean that a blind unreasoning adhesion to certain dogmas is claimed or unquestioning faith is demanded from the disciple. The casting off of this fetter means the arriving at absolute certainty, based either upon individual experience and personal first-hand knowledge or upon mathematical reasoning. The doubt which the pupil must for ever leave behind is that regarding certain facts in nature—facts of reincarnation and karma, of the existence of the Masters, and of the efficacy of the method of attaining the highest good by the Path of Holiness. There are many stages in doubt, from rank disbelief to the acceptance of a truth as a 'working hypothesis'. A lofty idealism, based on working hypotheses, will lead a man through the gates of Initiation ; but there comes a time when some at least of his working hypotheses must be living facts of his inmost consciousness—facts, not accepted on authority or blind belief, but known to be true because, by outer observation and inward realisation, they are evermore part of his individuality.

3. Superstition : taking the unessential for the essential and the outer ceremony for the inner reality (*Silabbataparāmāsa*). This fetter to be cast off comprehends all kinds of unreasoning or mistaken belief, all dependence on the efficacy of outer rites and ceremonies. The pupil knows that rites and ceremonies have their place in human evolution acting as bridges for ordinary men to reach the unseen reality, but that they are no longer

necessary for him who has learnt to depend upon himself alone. Above all, he is free from the superstition of the wrath of the Power behind evolution, and knows that all that exists is within the Universal Love.

II. After the pupil has *utterly* cast aside the three fetters he passes the Second Initiation. But before he can proceed to the Second Initiation, the Initiator of that occasion demands evidence as to how the candidate has used the powers acquired by him at the First Initiation, and one of the most beautiful features of the ceremony is the part when those who have been helped by the candidate come forward to give their testimony. It is also requisite for this Initiation that the candidate shall have developed the power to function freely in his mental body, for although the ceremony of the First Initiation is held on the astral plane, that of the Second takes place in the lower mental world.

If the Lord Maitreya acts as Initiator, the ceremony usually takes place either in His garden or in His great room. He Himself is present in His physical body, and so in many cases is the Lord Vaivasvata Manu, who lives close by. All others present are usually in the astral vehicle in the case of the First Initiation, but in the mental body in the case of the Second. The Great Ones present focus Their consciousnesses with perfect ease at whatever level is required, and there is of course on the astral and mental planes a perfect counterpart of everything on the physical.

The pupil is now Bahūdaka (Bahū Ūdaka or Many Waters—he who goes on pilgrimages at holy places) according to the Hindu. For the Buddhist he is Sakadāgāmi—"the man who returns but once"—which means that he who has reached that level should need but one more incarnation

before attaining Arhatship, the Fourth Initiation, after which there is no compulsory physical rebirth. Thus only one more physical birth is obligatory on him, and at the end of his next physical life, having already attained Arhatship, he can, if he so chooses, complete the remaining stages of the Path without returning to incarnation. In the Gospel story, which, rightly read, is less the history of a Person, than a mighty drama of the Initiation of the Spirit, it is called the Baptism, when the Spirit of God came down upon Jesus and abode with Him. The Spirit which comes down is the Spirit of Intuition; and before he can go further, the pupil must learn to bring it down through his enlarged causal and mental bodies to his physical consciousness, so that it may 'abide on him' and guide him.

During this period which is usually one of considerable psychic and intellectual advancement no additional fetters are cast off, but the pupil has to build up and perfect all his subtle bodies and thus develop psychic faculties and acquire superphysical powers belonging to perfect superphysical bodies. He now has astral consciousness at his command during his waking life, and during sleep the heaven-world will be open before him—for the consciousness of a man when away from his physical body is always one stage higher than it is while he is still burdened with the house of flesh. This stage, during which a very great and rapid development of the mental body takes place, is, as a rule, a short one after which the pupil passes the third Portal.

III. The aspirant who has passed the third great Portal, called Transfiguration in the Christian story, is spoken of by the Hindu as the Hamsa, the Swan, the bird of heaven, the symbol of the recognition of the 'I' as

one with God ; he who realises ' I am That '. For the Buddhists he then becomes Anāgāmi, " he who does not return," so called because it is expected of him that he will attain the next Initiation—Arhatship—in the same incarnation and because, consequently, birth in a physical body, unless he so chooses, is no longer necessary in order to attain to the final goal. The work can be done in the invisible worlds, and the Initiate can, from there, if he so decides, proceed to the Fifth Initiation.

During the time intervening between the Third and Fourth Initiations he has finally to get rid of the remains of two more weaknesses.

4. Attachment to the enjoyment of sensation typified by earthly love (Kāmarāga). It is not by any means that he will not feel the attraction of what is pleasant or beautiful or clean, nor the repulsion of the opposites of these things, and will not take them into account in the course of his work. But he will not let them be a deciding element in duty, and will override them entirely on those emergency occasions when it is necessary for his work. We see in the Gospel allegory how the Christ threw aside the attraction of all that would hold Him back from the approaching Passion. But the noblest human love never dies ; his love for humanity has increased and widened till it embraces all with the same fervour which at first was lavished on one or two ; though, while gaining this wide affection, all his affection for his closer friends—that between egos—is enormously intensified and becomes that " perfect love that casteth out fear ".

5. All possibility of anger or hatred (Patigha). At this stage he is willing to help an enemy as readily as a friend, and takes as much joy in helping a foe as in the helping of the dearest relative. In the Gospel allegory we

see how all repulsion had ended for the Christ when "the woman who was a sinner" was allowed to approach Him, to bathe His feet with her tears, to wipe them with her hair. The disciple here learns to rise above attraction and repulsion.

IV. Between the Third Initiation and the Fourth there is the gulf of silence where the disciple hangs alone in the void with nothing on earth to trust to, nothing in heaven to look to, with even the vision of the Supreme blurred and dimmed as symbolised by the Agony in the Garden. Passing onward through the stages of the Passion he sees himself betrayed, denied, rejected, held up upon the cross of agony for all men to mock at and to despise; hears the taunt of his enemies: "He saved others, himself he cannot save," utters the cry of the breaking heart: "My God, my God, why hast *Thou* forsaken me?" finds himself in that uttermost loneliness for evermore, and losing the God without him, ultimately finds the God within.

Then the Fourth Initiation—the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of the Christ—is accomplished. He it is who has become the Christ crucified and therefore the helper of the world. Loneliness for him is over for ever, for he has found the One Life and knows it for evermore. He becomes the Paramahansa, "He who is beyond the 'I am He'" according to the Hindu phraseology, where there is no longer even the distinction between 'I' and 'He,' but where there is only the One; the Arhat, 'the Venerable,' the Perfect, the Worthy, according to the Buddhist nomenclature, with no more compulsory incarnation for him. Henceforth the consciousness of the Buddhic plane is his while still in the physical body, and when he leaves that body in sleep or trance, he passes at once into the unutterable glory of the Nirvānic plane.

At this stage, between the Resurrection and the Ascension of the Christian drama, he has completely to cast off five more weaknesses or fetters. When he stands upon the step of Arhatship, half his path from the First Initiation to Adeptship may be said to have been trodden, for he has then cast off five of the ten great fetters in an average of seven incarnations, and before him lies the task of casting off the remaining five, for which also, if he so chooses, an average of seven incarnations is allowed, though this average is in no sense a rule. The five remaining fetters of which the last remnants have to be cast off are :

6. Desire for beauty of form or for existence in a form (*Rūparāga*), either in the physical or even in the heaven-world. All clinging to life in form is to be thrown off.

7. Desire for formless life (*Arūparāga*), on the highest and formless planes of the heaven-world or even on the Buddhic plane, which would merely be a less sensual form of selfishness.

8. Pride (*Māno*), *Ahamkāra*, the 'I'-making faculty which realises itself as apart from others.

9. Agitation or irritability (*Uddhachcha*). He must be perfectly unruffled by anything whatever that might happen to him.

10. Ignorance (*Avijjā*). He must get rid of all that stands in the way of his acquisition of perfect knowledge as regards our planetary chain.

All the attributes and faculties are developed by the Chela in himself with very little help beyond guidance from his Master. "An Adept," says an occult aphorism, "becomes. He is not made."

V. The Initiate then passes through the Fifth Initiation, symbolised by the Ascension and the Descent of

the Holy Spirit, and becomes the Jivanmukta, the liberated life, of the Hindu ; the Asekha, one who has no more to learn, of the Buddhist. With the cycle of humanity accomplished and the ideal of Divine Manhood fulfilled, He stands the Perfect Man, Master of life and death, freed from all fetters that can bind, and with all powers given to Him in heaven and on earth. He has been born for the last time and has attained final salvation. He has gained eternal life and stands among the many Brethren of whom the Christ is the First-born, has " become a pillar in the temple of my God who shall go out no more," and has now attained to the stature of the fulness of the Christ.

Q. How does the Adept now become a Master ?

Ans. Having accomplished His pilgrimage, the Adept now sees, as stated before, seven paths stretching before Him, seven paths of glory and of power, leading Him onwards in the great realms of superphysical life, all of which, save one, free Him for ever from the burden of human flesh, and stretch onward, far away from our earth. As He stands gazing at these seven pathways, through the exquisite music which surrounds Him, there sounds a sob of pain, and He hears a cry from the world in its darkness, in its misery, in its spiritual starvation, in its moral degradation—the cry of humanity in bondage—and sees the gropings of the ignorant, the helpless and the blind. Then out of compassion, out of old sympathy for the humanity of which He is the flower, He turns backward to the world that He had left, and instead of casting away the burden of the flesh He takes it up and bears it still, in order that He may help humanity. By treading the Path of Holiness, He has reached Perfection, has conquered death and won Immortality ; He has achieved Freedom and lives in the Eternal. But being Perfect, He remains to help us who

are imperfect ; having realised Eternity, He stays amid the shadows of time until we also realise ; He has opened the gateway of Bliss, and He holds it open, standing beside it, that we may all enter in before Him, for He who was the first to achieve has made Himself the last to enjoy. His feelings may be very faintly echoed thus in the words of Mrs. Annie Besant :

“ I will not have final peace till my brothers share it ; I will not have final liberty that is not shared by my brothers and enjoyment which is not theirs. I will not take Nirvāna for myself and leave my brothers in the bonds of birth and death, in their ignorance and in their darkness, in their helplessness and in their folly. If I have won wisdom, I have won it for their enlightening. If I have won strength, I have won it for their service. If I have learnt to vibrate in agony for man, what avail is it then to throw aside the sheaths and go on where no agony is useful ? I will stay where I am and will work for man. Every pain of man shall strike me. Every agony of man shall touch me, and shall wring my heart. Every folly of man shall be my folly by identification with humanity, and every sin and crime of theirs my suffering until the whole of us are free.”

And so He becomes what we call a Master, a link between God and man, a liberated Spirit who is still willing to bear the burden of the flesh, in order that He may not lose close contact with the humanity that He loves, and who puts Himself at human service by the supreme act of renunciation, to remain in bondage till all are free, and to go to Nirvāna when all can go hand in hand with Him.

He and such as He, rising in grade beyond grade of superhuman wisdom and power, form the Occult Hierarchy which consists of the Guardians of the World, who remain with us to rule, to teach, to guide and definitely to help humanity along the difficult way of human evolution.

He has become a Saviour of the world, and having suffered and conquered all He is able to 'help to the uttermost,' not by substitution of person, but by identity of nature; not by taking the place of the weak or the sinner, but by infusing His own strength into the weak, by permeating the sinner with His purity. He thus knows the identity of nature which makes His the weakness of the weakest as well as the strength of the strongest, which makes His the sin of the guiltiest as well as the purity of the purest, and thus the lowest is as intensely loved as the highest, is as much part of Him as the loftiest and the purest.

He aids the progress of humanity in countless ways as stated before. Every man that stretches out his hands, His hand is ready to help; of every brother of His race that asks for guidance, His heart answers to the cry. He is seeking through the world for some who have ears to hear the Wisdom, and who will answer His appeal for messengers to carry it to humanity at large, with the words: "Here am I; send me." He stands there waiting until we are willing to be taught, and give Him the opportunity which He has renounced Nirvāna to secure.

The Path to the Masters of the Wisdom is always open, and any one of us can tread it and achieve the goal that They have achieved; born of the Eternal Spirit it is the true birth-right of the human Spirit to know his own Divinity and then to realise and manifest it, to know the possibilities of his own nature and then to fulfil the purpose for which he came into the world; for the world exists for the unfolding of the Spirit and nothing less than Divinity is the true goal of man.

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